

in the name of  
God



# Mujahedin-e Khalq in International Documents



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# Mujahedin-e Khalq in International Documents



## | Introduction |

One of the most clear-cut examples of western governments' double standards, especially the United States, towards terrorism, is, without a shadow of a doubt, their behavior towards the terrorist Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO, also known as MEK and NCRI) in the past three decades.

In a blatant violation of international laws, MKO members were granted asylum while the group was designated as a terrorist group. The MKO's headquarters in France was placed under police protection, while the French authorities were well aware of their crimes and background.

The group was allowed to hold meetings and gatherings in European countries, while it was proscribed as a foreign terrorist organization. Although the western organizations were increasingly revealing the human rights violations inside the MKO, no efforts were made to rescue the members from the claws of the cult's cruel leadership.

MKO, which was once playing the role of an excuse for the US government to invade Iraq, was declared as the "protected persons" by the same government after the 2003 invasion of the Arab country.

Although many experts have revealed the groundless claims of the MKO regarding Iran's nuclear energy program, these baseless claims had been widely used in anti-Iran propaganda. Whenever they needed to pressure the Iranian side in their political negotiations, some Europeans used the terrorist group's members in London, Washington, Paris, and Geneva to stage protests and chant slogans against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Despite the support western governments have been providing for the MKO, they themselves have disclosed some facts about the group in terms of some international reports and documents. The US Government, Human Rights Watch, independent Iran experts and think tanks have all documented the cult-like and abusive practices carried out by MKO against its own rank and files and some of its major terrorist attacks against Iranians. A review on these documents and reports could be of some use to the researchers, journalists, and politicians who are unaware of the group.

Historical documents reveal that, when the MKO embarked upon its armed struggle



in Iran and when its leaders escaped to France, some western governments vainly counted on the terrorist group being able to influence Iranian internal issues. After some years of the group's presence in Europe in 1994, the US Department of State prepared a report detailing the structure, activities, external support, and history of MKO. The report described MKO "a mosquito" in comparison to Iran and explained the group's alliance with Saddam Hussein and joining the Iraqi dictator in his brutal repression of the 1991 Kurdish uprising. The report also mentioned MKO's acts of sabotage and their violent attacks in Iran that murder civilians.

A 2005 study by the Human Rights Watch described MKO's extensive human rights abuses against its own members. The report unveiled many inhuman and cult-like practices within the MKO, such as mandatory divorce and the enforced separation of children from their parents.

In mid-2009, the Rand Corporation published a monograph titled "Mujahedin-e Khalq in Iraq: A Policy Conundrum". Written by a team of four who worked for 15 months in the US and Iraq, the report presents the most thorough analysis to date of the MKO's cult-like practices. It says, "Rajavi instituted what he termed an 'ideological revolution' in 1985, which, over time, imbued the MKO with many of the typical characteristics of a cult, such as authoritarian control, confiscation of assets, sexual control (including mandatory divorce and celibacy), emotional isolation, forced labor, sleep deprivation, physical abuse, and limited exit options." There are lots of other internationally known documents that perfectly reveal the terrorist nature of MKO group and indicate how unpopular and isolated the terrorist group is in the eyes of the Iranian people, both inside and outside of the country, as well as all the people around the world. It doesn't matter whether MKO is taken off the terrorist list, it doesn't even matter whether the US and some other western countries provide support for it, a leopard cannot change its spots.

In this book we have tried to gather such reports and documents which confirm the terrorist nature of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization.

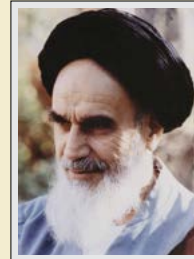




They (US government) are raising the flag of fighting against terrorism and are still repeating their claim shamelessly. However, they are cooperating with hypocrites (MKO) whose hands are smeared with the blood of Iranian people and Iraqi Kurds and Shi'ites. In the case of 1991 uprising in Iraq in which Saddam massacred Shi'ites in southern Iraq and many other regions in the country, Munafeqin fought alongside Saddamis against the Shi'ites. Terror is their (MKO's) job, to which they confess and are proud of. The world has recognized them as terrorists, but the US has taken them under its wings. It was unfolded that terrorism is bad when it's not at the service of the United States. But, if terrorism serves the US, then, it's a very good thing and there is nothing wrong with it! It is a crucible, showing what fighting against terrorism and democracy means.

Supreme Leader's speech to a group of workers and teachers, April 30, 2003





Do not assume that they are doing such actions because they are powerful. They have exploded a bomb somewhere; a 12-year-old child can also take a bomb, plant it somewhere and blow himself up. This is the utmost weakness. I consider these (MKO members) as worse than Ibn Muljam (person who killed Imam Ali, the first Shia Imam), because he, god damn him, committed his job among the people. But these individuals even lack the manliness of that scoundrel man, and do things stealthily.

I consider Abbas Agha (Tabrizi), who shot Iran's prime minister and himself in public with pistol when he saw he was going to be caught, a (real) man. Those who decamped from here, and give orders from abroad (to their agents) to surreptitiously kill people. These are the theses of the scoundrels.









## Mrs. Ford Meets Ky

Betty Ford visited with Nguyen Cao Ky, r., formerly prime minister of South Vietnam, yesterday during a tour of Camp

Pendleton, the site of "Little Saigon." Mrs. Ford's visit to the refugee camp in San Clemente, Calif., made her the first member of the presidential family to inspect Vietnamese camps in the United States. At her side is Brig. Gen. Paul Graham, her escort and commander of the base.

# U.S. Center Still Occupied In Laos, Curfew on Yanks

VIENTIANE, Laos (AP)—Student continued their occupation of the American aid headquarters today. A 6 p.m. curfew was ordered for several hundred Americans in a housing area four miles outside the city and they were prevented from taking any personal belongings.

Communist Pathet Lao troops at the gate of the housing area stopped all cars going in and out and searched them thoroughly.

The students who took over the aid compound looted the commissary, which is the chief source of food for the government.

"There's not enough food available on the local market to feed them," said one U.S. official.

The top U.S. diplomat in Laos met with two Pathet Lao ministers last night in an attempt to end the student occupation of the aid compound, where two Marines and a civilian are trapped.

"The situation is cooling," said U.S. Charge d'Affaires Christian A. Chapman after the meeting. "Negotiations are still going on. They are going back to see the prime minister at a cabinet meeting."

At the headquarters of the Agency for International Development, which was occupied early yesterday, some 200 young demonstrators in sweatshirts and an assortment of castoff military clothing stood at the gate in drizzling rain. They swigged American beer from cans looted from the American club in-

side the compound. Piles of empty beer cans littered the roadway inside the gate. Pathet Lao soldiers did nothing about the demonstrators.

The students told newsmen they had offered to release the three Americans if they would "surrender" but all three refused.

THE SEIZURE of the Vientiane headquarters of AID followed similar attacks on AID facilities in Savannakhet and Luang Prabang since the Communists began taking control of the coalition government two weeks ago.

Chapman also said many American families in Vientiane were virtual prisoners, since they were stopped from going in and out of a U.S. housing area by joint patrols of Pathet Lao and rightist policemen.

The charge said he had protested this and had told the Pathet Lao that the AID compound "is just as much public ground as this embassy," Chapman met at the U.S. Embassy with Minister of Economy and Plans Soth Phothray and Minister of Culture Maha Khou.

In the southern city of Savannakhet, a dozen Americans and six other foreigners completed a week under house arrest but appeared to be in no danger.

Savannakhet, a former rightist stronghold, was peacefully occupied by Pathet Lao forces Tuesday.

Pathet Lao soldiers posted guards yesterday at the gate of an American housing compound in Vientiane known

as Kilometer 6. They at first allowed Americans to come and go but prohibited their taking any belongings out of the area.

However, Chapman's statement about virtual prisoners indicated the Pathet Lao later had prevented the Americans from leaving and entering.

THE STUDENTS who seized the Vientiane AID headquarters issued handwritten lists of demands which included the immediate dissolution of the agency in Laos and the departure of all of its American employees within three days.

They also demanded that the agency turn over its facilities to the Laotian government, including personal goods that had been imported tax free, that taxes be paid on personal property of Americans before they leave the country and that police check on the export of "individual American belongings" and on payment of taxes and visas.

AID runs a \$22.6-million assistance program in Laos. About 350 work for the U.S. government.

In other Indochina developments, Associated Press Correspondent George Esper reported from Saigon that three Soviet tankers have arrived at the nearby port of Nha Be with badly needed fuel. Gasoline is now selling for up to \$8 a gallon in the South Vietnamese capital.

## \$5.3 Million Bond Issue Sold by City

The city's good credit rating was illustrated dramatically yesterday when its \$5.3 million bond issue sold at an interest rate more than 2 percent lower than an issue offered by the City of Detroit.

Halsey-Stuart Co. of New York City submitted the low bid of 6.04 percent on Pittsburgh's bonds. Seven bids were submitted. The same company bid 8.30 percent on Detroit's bonds.

The city's 12-year bond issue will be used to finance capital projects such as

## USW Warned Of 'Meddlers' At Erie Confab

By JOHN P. MOODY

Post-Gazette Staff Writer

ERIE—Professional meddlers want to take over the 1.4 million-member United Steelworkers union, a USW official charged here yesterday.

Bruce Thrasher, an assistant to USW President I. W. Abel, said the professional meddlers rationalize "that they know more about our union than you and I..."

THRASHER SPOKE at the opening session of the 32nd conference of the USW's District 20, based in Beaver County, Thrasher said:

"Now that our union is firmly established we have no intention of standing by and allowing these vultures to pounce on it and hopelessly exploit its resources." The presidential assistant did not identify the professional meddlers, but there have been several groups both inside and outside the union resisting some USW policy.

"At present," Thrasher said, "we are listening to a small chorus of agitating voices, particularly outside of the union, who are advocating a revolution — a revolution that permits interlopers to take over our union and run this organization according to the utopian ideas of these professional meddlers."

"This is not a salable philosophy," Thrasher said of the critics, "because the average member knows that we have a system that offers an orderly alternative — that of an honest, free, democratic union."

An estimated 460 delegates, representing more than 65,000 District 20 members, are taking up 1977 labor contract demands and problems.

Resolutions include a wide variety of demands submitted by the 194 local units that comprise the district.

THE DEMANDS RANGE from suggestions for a shorter work week to provisions for a guaranteed annual wage.

Kay Kluz, director of District 20, spoke in favor of the shorter work week and said a six-hour day, which delegates proposed, is a small start in the right direction. Kluz said:

"More of us have to work less time in order that more people will have jobs. The six hours is of an absolute necessity."

Kluz explained that if the number of unemployed workers increases, a very small number will be paying taxes to support the majority.

One resolution scheduled for airing today calls for adjustments in the international constitution that would permit Abel to seek a fourth term as president.

UNDER THE CURRENT provisions, Abel, 67, must retire when his present term expires in 1977.

Kluz said District 20 resolutions prevent action on such a resolution but it will be forwarded to the resolutions committee of the international convention with a highly favorable recommendation.



COL. PAUL R. SHAFFER JR.



LT. COL. JACK J. TURNER

## 2 Yanks Shot to Death, Iran Blames Marxists

(Continued from Page 1)

prison bus transferring them to another jail.

THE U.S. EMBASSY quoted a witness to the 6:30 a.m. shooting in an up-town residential section as saying one car blocked the path of the Americans' car and a second car bumped it from behind.

Three men got out of the cars and shot the officers several times as they fell to the floor. A third car picked up the gunmen and raced away.

Shaffer and Turner were among 1,000 American military personnel and 2,000 civilians assigned to the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group in Iran.

Shaffer, an agriculture graduate of Ohio State University, was married and the father of two children.

Turner, a graduate of the University of Nebraska, was married and the fa-

ther of three children.

An Iranian government spokesman expressed "deep regret" at the murders and said such terrorism was "deeply repellent" to the feelings of the overwhelming majority of Iranians. He said the deaths of the American officers were inspired from outside the country.

A MARXIST-ANARCHIST underground has been active in Iran for several years.

About 200 members of the underground have been killed in battles with the police or executed by firing squads. The Shah said during his recent visit to Washington that about 3,000 of them are in jail.

There have been several previous attacks on Americans in the past five years of shootings and bombings, including an abortive kidnap attempt in December, 1970, on then U.S. Ambassador Douglas MacArthur.

## Area Consumer Prices Climb 2.1%, U.S. Says

(Continued from Page 1)

tion costs showed a 1.3 per cent increase as doctors' office visits, health insurance, televisions, drive-ins and beer cost more.

As expected, apparel costs, which usually rise in April, increased 3.7 in the Pittsburgh area. Heading the list were men's cotton slacks, T-shirts and handkerchiefs, and women's sweaters, dresses and accessories.

District transportation costs rose 2.1 per cent from January to April as automobiles, gasoline, repairs and insurance increased.

James J. Pate, chief economist of the Department of Commerce, said the basic rate of inflation now appears to be in the 6 to 7 per cent range. By the end of the year, he said, it will probably drop by 1 per cent. Consumer prices rose 12.2 per cent in 1974.

The Labor Department reported the purchasing power of the average workers paycheck continued to drop last month even though the work week and average hourly wages increased.

Allowing for inflation and deductions for taxes, real spendable earnings fell 1.1 per cent in April and were 4.1 per cent below a year ago.

## Copter Bound for Thai Base

# 23 More Deaths Tied To Mayaguez Incident

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Pentagon acknowledged yesterday that 23 Americans killed in a helicopter crash in Thailand nine days ago were on a mission

The others were four helicopter crewmen and an aircraft mechanic.

However, one well-placed Pentagon source conceded there was concern in

## Miller, Kids Plan Reunion

TERRA LINDA, Calif. (AP)—Capt. Charles T. Miller of the Mayaguez hasn't seen his son and daughter in 22 years, but he says he will contact them Friday night when he arrives in Hong Kong.

"Oh, wow! That's fantastic," cried Cheryl Miller Pedersen, 28.

"Beautiful," said her 34-year-old brother, James T. Miller. "We had a little doubt about whether he would accept us so long. I was

## SUMMER STANDBY. GOOD-NEWS COTTON. ANOTHER LANE BRYANT





## Slaying Americans in Iran

Since its inception in 1963, MKO opposed the pro-western Pahlavi regime, and carried out its strategy of armed struggle in the period leading up to the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The results included the murder of six Americans in 1970s. These assassinations were a source of proud for the anti-imperialist MKO and they triumphantly claimed responsibility for the attacks in their publications.

However, after the fall of MKO's chief patron, Saddam Hussein, the group felt the need to shift its policy in order to survive. And now after some four decades, MKO claims it has turned upside down denying any killing of US citizens, therefore now it is welcome in the United States!

Following are some newspaper pieces which published the news of the slaying of the US citizens in the hands of the MKO terrorists.





# MKO on the Global Terrorism Database



S	R	Q	P	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E		
eventid	year	country	region	provstate	city	attacktype1_bt	target1	corp1	targettype1_bt	nathty1_bt	gname	weaptype1_bt	weapdetail1		
199112230006	1991	Iraq	Middle East & North Africa	Baghdad	Assassination	2 Iranian Diplomats*	Iran State Dept	Government (Diplomatic)	Iraq State Dept	Government (Diplomatic)	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Firearms	Pistol	2
199203200001	1992	Iraq	Middle East & North Africa	Baghdad	Unknown	Embassy Vehicle	Iran State Dept	Government (Diplomatic)	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Unknown				3
199204050016	1992	United States	North America	New York	New York City	Hostage Taking (Barricade)	Iranian Mission to the United Nations in New York	Government in Exile	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Melee	Knives			4
199205200015	1992	Iraq	Middle East & North Africa	Markazi	Atrak	Facility/Infrastructure Attack	Center of city	Court	Private Citizens & Property	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Incendiary	Incendiary		5
199207160010	1992	Germany	Western Europe	Proctum	Unarmed Assault	Vehicle Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati	Iraqi Govt	Government (General)	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Melee	Stones			6
199207160013	1992	Iraq	Middle East & North Africa	Abu Saddam	Armed Assault	Unit	Military	Military	Iraq	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Firearms	Automatic firearm			7
199210100023	1992	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Tehran	Bombing/Explosion	Tombs of Ayatollah Khomeini	Court	Other	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			8
199210100017	1992	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Tehran	Armed Assault	Guards Corp Vehicle	Military	Military	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Incendiary	Incendiary			9
199210120028	1992	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Khuzestan	Unarmed Assault	Guards Corps Vehicle	Military	Military	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Unknown				10
199210150034	1992	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Tehran	Armed Assault	Guards Corps Toyota Patrol Vehicle	Military	Military	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Incendiary	Incendiary			11
199210150035	1992	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Gom	Bombing/Explosion	Govt-operated Gas Station	Court	Government (General)	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			12
199210140013	1992	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Tehran	Armed Assault	Guards Corps Nissan Patrol Vehicle	Military	Military	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Incendiary	Incendiary			13
199210140014	1992	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Tehran	Armed Assault	Guards Corps Bus	Military	Military	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Incendiary	Incendiary			14
199210150014	1992	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Tehran	Armed Assault	Guards Corps Patrol Vehicle	Military	Military	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Incendiary	Incendiary			15
199403070015	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Nat Shahr	Armed Assault	Police Vehicle	Police	Police	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Firearms	Automatic firearm			16
199403070016	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Mashhad	Bombing/Explosion	Unit	Police	Police	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			17
199403070017	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Marand	Bombing/Explosion	Station	Police	Police	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			18
199403070018	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Kolachya-ye Ghan	Armed Assault	Center	Khmeini	NGO	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Incendiary	Incendiary			19
199403070019	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Casban	Bombing/Explosion	Police Center	Police	Police	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			20
199403080013	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Casban	Facility/Infrastructure Attack	Warehouse	Government	Business	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Incendiary	Incendiary			21
199403080014	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Tehran	Facility/Infrastructure Attack	Family's Foundation Warehouse	Government	Government (General)	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Incendiary	Incendiary			22
199403090008	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Hamadan	Bombing/Explosion	Mobilization Base	Government	Government (General)	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			23
199403090009	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Tehran	Facility/Infrastructure Attack	Communication Center	Government	Government (General)	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Incendiary	Incendiary			24
199403090010	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Tehran	Armed Assault	Vehicle	Government	Government (General)	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Incendiary	Incendiary			25
199403100011	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Lahjan	Bombing/Explosion	Vehicle	Unknown	Private Citizens & Property	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			26
199403110007	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Tehran	Bombing/Explosion	Vehicle	Government	Government (General)	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			27
199403110006	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Mashhad	Bombing/Explosion	Center	Police	Police	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			28
199403120032	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Mashhad	Bombing/Explosion	Vehicle	Government	Government (General)	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			29
199403120033	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Nazari-ye Tarkane	Bombing/Explosion	Voice and Vision Center	Government	NGO	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			30
199403120034	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Arno	Bombing/Explosion	Vehicle	Government	Government (General)	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			31
199403120035	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Sari	Bombing/Explosion	Revolutionary Guards Base	Military	Military	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			32
199403140014	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Mashhad	Bombing/Explosion	Jeep/Car Vehicle	Government	Government (General)	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			33
199403170035	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Nat-Shahr	Armed Assault	Elements 740th Battalion, 84th Division	Military	Military	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Firearms	Automatic firearm			34
199403180016	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Ham	Bombing/Explosion	Sumar Samrah Highway	Government	Utilities	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Mine			35
199403180011	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Rohamzahar	Bombing/Explosion	Support Base, 14th Division, Revolutionary Out	Military	Military	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Firearms	Automatic firearm			36
199403180012	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Hosaynshahr	Armed Assault	Tactical base, 21st Reza Brigade	Military	Military	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Firearms	Automatic firearm			37
199403180013	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Hosaynshahr	Armed Assault	Barracks, 21st Reza Brigade	Military	Military	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Firearms	Automatic firearm			38
199403180014	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Dahban	Bombing/Explosion	5 Oil pipelines	Unknown	Utilities	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			39
199403180015	1994	Iran	Middle East & North Africa	Musayen	Bombing/Explosion	Oil pumping station	Unknown	Utilities	Iran	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Explosive			40
199404150004	1994	Iraq	Middle East & North Africa	Baghdad	Bombing/Explosion	Republican Palace	Government	Government (General)	Iraq	Mujahideen-I Khaly (MK)	Explosives/Bombs/Dyn	Mortar			41

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) was established in 2005 as a US Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence based at the University of Maryland, tasked with utilizing state-of-the-art theories, methods, and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve the understanding of the origins, dynamics, and social and psychological impacts of terrorism.



In 2009, START was recognized by DHS for outstanding contributions to the security of the United States for its long-term support of the Global Terrorism Database (GTD); an open-source database including information on over 87,000 domestic and international terrorist events around the world since 1970.

The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) is an open-source database featuring information on over 104,000 terrorist attacks around the world from 1970 through 2011.

It includes information on more than 47,000 bombings, 14,000 assassinations, and 5,300 kidnappings since 1970. GTD chronicles 49 terrorist acts by the MKO from 1970 through 1990. Twenty six of these attacks have been conducted before the 1979 Islamic revolution, and the rest 23 terrorist attacks have been carried out after the revolution by the MKO.

According to GTD, 42 attacks of the MKO have been carried out in different Iranian cities, 3 attacks in Beirut, and 4 others in Madrid, Oslo, Washington, and Hamburg, and the targets range from private citizens to military and religious figures. Since 1991 until 2001, the database contains 62 terrorist attacks performed by the MKO, 55 of which were carried out in different Iranian cities, 5 in Iraq, and two others in the US and Germany.







## | Rajavi Took out a Loan from Soviet Union |



In a letter on January 7, 1986, to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union, Farhad Olfat, the experienced high-ranking member of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization made an unprecedented demand. He asked for a loan of \$300 million to provide the necessary means for bringing Rajavi to power!

What follows is the letter of Farhad Olfat, a senior member of the MKO:

Asking a loan from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union

Dear Comrades,

Respectfully, the People's Mujahedin of Iran who leads a national revolutionary struggle for the overthrowing of Khomei-



ni regime, and according to the attached documents, is engaged in an all-out military, political, social, and propaganda struggle against the regime, needs a total sum of \$300 million to achieve its revolutionary and anti-imperialist purposes.

Obviously, most of our financial requirements are met through the donations of people in Iran as well as the confiscation of properties belonging to the Khomeini regime.

However due to a shortage of funds, we ask our comrades at the Central Committee of the Soviet Union's Communist Party to loan the People's Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization any possible amount of money of the above-mentioned expenses, which will definitely have a huge and unforgettable effect on the advancing of the revolutionary struggle in Iran.

It is important to mention that as we are in serious need of this loan, which plays a decisive role in our organization's strategic and tactical planning in 1986, we are asking for its immediate approval. People's Mujahedin of Iran hereby pledges to repay the loan in installment from 1988 onwards.

Regards,  
Farhad Olfat



## 1994 US State Department Report on the MKO

### PEOPLE'S MOJAHEDIN OF IRAN



According to Wendy R. Sherman Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs, who submitted on behalf of the secretary of state the 1994 US State Department Report on the People's Mojahedin of Iran, the US Government has been monitoring MKO's activities since the 1970s.

"The Administration has welcomed the opportunity to conduct a comprehensive review of the people's Mojahedin of Iran," she added. "We believe the report to be a balanced and comprehensive analysis."

The report begins with an intro:

"The following report has been prepared at the request of congress. Section 525 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995, public Law No. 103-256, requires the president to submit "a report detailing the structure, current activities, external support, and history of the people's Mojahedin of Iran. Such report shall include information on any current direct or indirect support by the people's Mojahedin for acts of international terrorism." The conference report noted that congress intended no prejudgment of the organization and urged the Administration to consult with a wide range of people in the preparation of the report.



Responsibility for preparing the report was delegated to the secretary of state by a presidential memorandum dated July 26, 1994. Government agencies that contributed informational records, intelligence, analysis, and expertise to the report include: the Departments of State, Defense (including the Defense Intelligence Agency and the four military services), Justice, Treasury, and Transportation; the National Intelligence Council; the National Security Agency; and the Central Intelligence Agency.

In preparing the report, we have consulted with a large cross-section of Iranian opposition groups and Iranian expatriates, including Mojahedin sympathizers. We obtained the viewpoints of prominent American academic specialists on Iran and the Middle East through personal interviews and research of their published works. We surveyed Iran experts at nongovernmental organizations and “think-tanks.” We reviewed western media coverage of Mojahedin activities. Finally, we drew upon the voluminous collection of Mojahedin publications and radio broadcasts, a public record that ranges from the 1960s through October 1994.”

The report adds that “the Mojahedin revolutionaries developed and disseminated an eclectic ideology based on their personal interpretation of Shi’a Islamic theology and Marxist tenets. Then as now the Mojahedin advocated a two-pronged strategy of armed struggle and the use of propaganda to gain their political objectives.”

Regarding Masud Rajavi, the report says “he rose to command in 1975 after the Mojahedin experienced an internal schism. From his release from prison until today, he has maintained absolute control of the Mojahedin, the NCR, and its associated groups.”

In 1993, his wife Maryam Rajavi replaced him as the NCR’s “future president” of Iran. Previously, she had held the appointed position of NCR secretary-general. After his expulsion from France, Rajavi relocated to Baghdad, Iraq, adopting Saddam Hussein as his patron, in 1987.

Describing the Rajavi’s activities inside Iraq, the report reads, “Rajavi announced the formation of the National Liberation Army (NLA), the military wing of the Mojahedin, which conducted raids into Iran during the latter years of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. The NLA’s last major offensive reportedly was conducted against



Iraqi Kurds in 1991, when it joined Saddam Hussein's brutal repression of the Kurdish rebellion. In addition to occasional acts of sabotage, the Mojahedin are responsible for violent attacks in Iran that victimize civilians."

It then explains the MKO's "public relations campaign among Western press and public officials" through which they are seeking to buy "political support and financial backing." "Exploiting Western opprobrium of the behavior of the current government of Iran, the Mojahedin posit themselves as the alternative. To achieve that goal, they claim they have the support of a majority of Iranians. This claim is much disputed by academics and other specialists on Iran, who assert that in fact the Mojahedin-e Khalq have little support among Iranians. They argue that the Mojahedin's activities since the group's leadership fled from Iran in 1981-- particularly their alliance with Iraq and the group's internal oppression -- have discredited them among the Iranian polity."

The report adds that despite MKO's assertions that it "has abandoned its revolutionary ideology," "there is no written or public record of discussion or debate about the dramatic reversals in the Mojahedin's stated positions. Moreover, the Mojahedin's 29-year record of behavior does not substantiate its capability or intention to be democratic."

Referring to cult-like practices of the MKO, the report adds, "internally, the Mojahedin run their organization autocratically, suppressing dissent and eschewing tolerance of differing viewpoints. Rajavi, who heads the Mojahedin's political and military wings, has fostered a cult of personality around himself."

Having said all these, it concludes that "it is no coincidence that the only government in the world that supports the Mojahedin politically and financially is the totalitarian regime of Saddam Hussein."

Shunned by most Iranians and fundamentally undemocratic, the Mojahedin-e Khalq are not a viable alternative to the current government of Iran.

Explaining the history of the MKO, the report says the group was "established to overthrow the Shah" and "developed an eclectic ideological blend of Islam and Marxism that dictated both a war of armed struggle and a war of propaganda to achieve political power."

"As young students opposed to the regime of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the



founding members of the Mojahedin rejected nonviolence reformism. Instead, they established an organization dedicated to armed struggle. As they explained in a 1974 newspaper article, "We had to ask ourselves the question, "What is to be done?" Our answer was straightforward: "Armed Struggle."

Commitment to this strategic principle has defined the history of the Mojahe-din, from the group's formal establishment in 1965 until today. The founders, who kept the existence of the Mojahedin secret until 1972, organized members into compartmentalized cells subject to the authority of a central collective. They devoted their early years to the study and discussion of revolutionary theory and economics, reading such authors as Marx, Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevara, and Frantz Fanon. They also analyzed Islamic history, interpreting early Shi'ism as a protest movement against class exploitation and shi'ite oppression."

The report points out to the SAVAK's incarceration of MKO members in 1970s. "In 1972, after months of investigation, the Shah's internal security organization, SAVAK, arrested dozens of Mojahedin members who had unsuccessfully planned to blow up Tehran's main electrical Power Plant. They had hoped to disrupt the extravagant festivities the Shah sponsored in 1971 to celebrate the anniversary of 2,500 years of the monarchy. The government organized mass trials of the suspects, who responded by formally announcing that they were members of the Mojahedin-e Khalq, an organization which they had formed to resolve the 'fundamental contradictions between the people and the CIA-imposed regime'."

The report then moves on to mention the MKO's violent reaction towards the arrest of its members by the Shah's secret police. "Outside prison, the Mojahedin responded to the government persecution by commencing armed operations. Bombs were the Mojahedins weapon of choice, which they frequently employed against American targets. On the occasion of President Nixon's visit to Iran in 1972, for example, the MKO exploded time bombs at more than a dozen sites throughout Tehran, including the Iran-American Society, the U.S. information office, and the offices of Pepsi Cola and General Motors. From 1972-75, when an internal MKO upheaval and more regime arrests temporarily slowed down their activities; the Mojahedin continued their campaign of bombings, damaging such targets as the offices of Pan-American Airlines, Shell Oil Company, and British organizations. They also attacked police posts and prisons."



Referring to “MKO’s embrace of armed struggle,” it adds, “the adoption of Marxist tenets distinguished the Mojahedin from other Iranian opposition movements: the Mojahedin argued that the struggle against the Shah was part of a larger struggle against imperialism led by the, ‘world-devouring’ United States.”

“The intellectual contradictions between Shi’a Islam and Marxism, however, caused the Mojahedin to split in 1975. The organization broke down into Marxist and Muslim factions,” the report adds. “The Muslim faction, under Rajavi’s leadership, soon gained control of the organization. But the religious disagreement between the secular and Islamic factions of the MKO did not undermine their fundamental agreement on the issue of imperialism, nor their strategy of armed struggle against the Pahlavi regime and American interests in Iran.”

The 1994 US State Department Report on the MKO emphasizes that both factions of the MKO “continued to endorse armed resistance, making the Mojahedin ‘the single most violent underground group and the principal killers of U.S. employees in Iran.’”

“The Mojahedin’s enduring consensus on foreign policy is demonstrated by public statements of the group’s current leader, Masud Rajavi. At his sentencing during the 1972 trials, for example, Rajavi argued that most of the world’s problems had been created by imperialism and that “the main goal now is to free Iran of U.S. imperialism.” After his release from prison during the political chaos of January 1979, Rajavi delivered a series of lectures at the University of Tehran outlining the Mojahedin’s program, which remained faithful to its Marxist roots.”

The report then lists a number of American citizens killed by the MKO in Iran during the 1970s.

In the period leading up to the revolution and its immediate aftermath, the Mojahedin carried out their strategy of armed struggle. The results included the murder of Americans, support for the seizure of the U.S. embassy, and opposition to the release of U.S. hostages. The Mojahedin are known to have assassinated the following Americans in Iran during the 1970s:

Lt. Colonel Lewis L. Hawkins Killed: June 2, 1973

Air Force Colonel Paul Schaeffer Killed: May 21, 1975



Air Force Lt. Colonel Jack Turner Killed: May 21, 1975

Donald G. Smith, Rockwell International Killed: August 28, 1976

Robert R. Krongrad, Rockwell International Killed: August 28, 1976

William C. Cottrell, Rockwell International Killed: August 28, 1976

Reza Reza'i, a member of the Mojahedin's Ideological Team, was arrested and executed by the Shah's government for the murder of Colonel Hawkins. The attacks on the Rockwell employees occurred on the anniversary of the arrest of a Mojahedin member, Rahman Vahid Afrakhteh, for the murder of Colonels Schaeffer and Turner. In addition, Air Force Brigadier General Harold Price was wounded in a 1972 attack Planned by Mojahedin Central committee member, Kazem Zul Ai-Anvar. Widely credited in Tehran for these attacks at the time, the Mojahedin themselves claimed responsibility for these murders in their publications.

The report then moves onto another form of anti-US struggles of the MKO, that is the group's "support for hostage-taking," and asserts that the MKO not only participated in holding and defending the embassy but "offered political support for the hostage-keeping".

"Under Rajavi's leadership, the Mojahedin entered the political fray in 1979, working to expand the group's membership and popularity. Mojahedin newspapers and proclamations published at the time confirm the group's leadership in renouncing the United States. The very day that 400 university students overtook the U.S. embassy, the Mojahedin issued a proclamation headlined, "After the Shah, it's America's turn." Following the seizure of the embassy, the Mojahedin participated physically at the site, assisting in holding and defending the embassy against liberation. They also offered political support for the hostage-keeping. For example, the Mojahedin sent a telegram to Khomeini expressing allegiance to the Ayatollah's policy of "rooting out the aggressive, American imperialism of the traitorous Shah." The telegram closed with the following declaration: "(We are) awaiting the definitive command of the Imam (Khomeini) for uprooting all the imperialist and Zionist foundations.

The Mojahedin responded to the failed hostage rescue attempt by announcing in Mojahed that they had placed their "military units," "part-time guerrilla units" and "militia" at the disposal of the Revolutionary Guards to fight U.S. imperialism. After 444 days of captivity, the hostages were released in January 1991. The next issue



of Mojahed reminded readers that “the Mojahedin-e Khalq were the first force who rose unequivocally to the support of the occupation of the American spy center,” and further noted that Mojahedin members spent “days and weeks,” “in neat and cold,” in front of the embassy in an effort to ensure that the occupied embassy was “an active and zealous anti-imperialist center.” It described the release of the hostages as a “retreat” and “surrender” and warned that resumption of diplomatic relations with the United States would be treason to the people and to the blood of our martyrs.”

“Like dismissed president Abol Hassan Bani Sadr, they had failed in secure a position in the new political structure. Although Rajavi and Bani Sadr fled to parts in July 1981, the Mojahedin resumed their strategy of armed struggle internally. Only the target had changed. Against Khomeini, whom the Mojahedin had supported for more than 15 years, they now declared war.”

The report also made reference to the MKO’s “wave of bombings and assassinations” against the fledgling Islamic Revolution in 1980s.

“The most spectacular attack occurred June 28, 1981, when two bombs ripped apart the headquarters of the Islamic Republic party (IRP, the party of the clerics), killing 74 members of the regime’s top leadership, including the IRP’s leader, Ayatollah Beheshti, 14 ministers, and 27 Majles deputies. On August 30, the Mojahedin reportedly bombed a meeting of the regime’s National Security Council, killing the new president, Ali Raja’i, and his new Prime Minister, Mohammad Javad Bahonar. In September, the Mojahedin engaged in direct military clashes with the government’s forces but were defeated. Throughout the next few years, the Mojahedin assassinated Majlis candidates and members, clerics, judges, and others they identified as foes. The group also detonated bombs in Tehran and throughout the country.”

“Moreover, since 1981 the MKO themselves have claimed responsibility for murdering thousands of Iranians they describe as agents of the regime.”

“In June 1986, France forced Rajavi to leave the country in what the media speculated was a deal with the government of Iran. According to these reports, Rajavi’s departure was the price France Paid for the release of French hostages in Lebanon. The MKO portrayed the ouster as Rajavi’s “historic flight for peace



and freedom.” Rajavi’s former attorneys, an Iranian jurist then resident in France, explained the move:

“When Rajavi came to France, he and his supporters quickly ran out of money. The Iraqi government offered him support and they accepted. In the long run, they became proxies of the Iraqi regime and lost much of their credibility within Iran.” Military scholar Anthony Cordesman offered another analysis: “The end result of France’s action, however, was to give Rajavi much better access to arms, training facilities near the border, and much larger financial resources.”

The report then presents information on the Rajavi’s relocation to Baghdad in June 1986.

“According to press reports, more than 1,000 Mojahedin members joined Rajavi in his relocation to Baghdad, where in a mocking gesture to the government of Iran, the Iraqis marked his arrival by hosting the type of ceremony normally accorded to a visiting government leader. The Mojahedin’s dedication to armed struggle had turned a new corner.”

“To conduct a military campaign whose threat to Iran has been derisively compared to a “mosquito,” the Mojahedin developed a lopsided alliance with Iraq’s Saddam Hussein. Dependent upon Saddam for money, arms, bases (approximately five), and permission to strike, the Mojahedin’s “National Liberation Army” became a tool in Iraq’s conflict with Iran.”

The report further underlines MKO’s attacks as military surrogates of the Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein.

“At the border the Mojahedin’s military record is limited. The group launched its most significant incursion in June and July 1988, when they coordinated an advance into Iran with Iraqi forces. During the same offensive, Iraqi units in other sectors of the front used chemical weapons against Iran. NLA units briefly seized the Iranian border towns of Mehran, Karand, and Islamabad-e Gharb. The Mojahedin claimed to have killed 40,000 Iranians, but other military observers said the, NLA “just got wiped out” when Iranian reinforcements arrived. The U.N-brokered ceasefire between Iran and Iraq, which went into effect August 20, 1988, undercut the Mojahedin’s utility to Saddam. But the Mojahedin remained in Iraq. “Mojahedin have learned to take proper tactics when and if necessary,” one MKO spokesman said



when questioned about the group's future in Iraq after the war. "We have always adjusted tactics in our fighting. The form of fighting is secondary."

In March 1991, following Operation Desert Storm, the NLA reportedly fought against the Iranian Revolutionary Guards near the border town of Qasr-e Shirin. Analysts assume that Saddam permitted the NLA to cross into Iran at this time in order to signal that he would not tolerate Iranian support for a Shi'a uprising in southern Iraq. At that time, the Iraqi Kurds also claimed the Mojahedin had assisted the Iraqi army in its suppression of the Kurds, "a claim-substantiated by refugees who fled near the Iranian border." The leader of the patriotic Union of Kurdistan of Iraq, Jalal Talabani, told reporters that "5,000 Iranian Mojahedin joined Saddam's forces in the battle for Kirkuk."

A recent Wall Street Journal report stated that the NLA's "only major offensive in the past six years came in 1991, just after the Gulf War, when Saddam Hussein ordered Mr. Rajavi to help quell a Kurdish revolt in northern Iraq, participants in that operation say." A former MKO member who was in Iraq said his trouble with the Mojahedin leadership, began when he questioned the MKO's operation against the Kurds."

MKO's attacks inside their own country are other activities of the group detailed to some extent in the 1994 US State Department Report on the MKO. The report describe the activities as "a number of self-described operations" which "included attacks against clearly civilian targets, such as automobiles, highways, government buildings open to the public, businesses, and private homes.

"In publications distributed in the West, the Mojahedin claim they do not target civilians in Iran. We are unable to confirm or refute this assertion. We do know, however, that in radio broadcasts of the "Voice of Mojahed," which are transmitted into Iran from Mojahedin bases in Iraq, the MKO has claimed responsibility for internal violence throughout Iran. On August 20, 1992, for example, "Voice of Mojahed" reported, "supporters of the Mojahedin-e Khalq in Kudasht (city), Lorestan (province), threw a grenade at the home of the regimes so called Majlis deputy here and damaged it.... The grenade was thrown at one side of the house to warn him about his crimes. At an opportune time, he will be punished for them."

"Government-controlled Iraqi media accounts of recent Saddam-Rajavi contacts provide further insights into the MKO's current relationship with Baghdad. Meeting



between the two are announced to buttress Saddam's isolated position or to send a message to the government of Iran. For example:

On July 31, 1994, Rajavi sent Saddam a "message of congratulations."

On January 26, 1994, Rajavi met with Saddam and Tariq Aziz, Iraq's deputy prime minister.

On July 18, 1993, Rajavi sent "cable of congratulations" to Saddam.

On June 17, 1992, Rajavi and a Mojahedin delegation visited Saddam.

The report then cites an Italian reporter who visited MKO bases in August 1994. He said the "support for the Iranian resistance is important to Saddam Hussein ... because the Mojahedin conduct diplomatic activity in favor of the abolition of the embargo against Iraq..."

In terms of MKO's attacks in the west, the report says the group "occasionally carry out violent attacks against Iranian government targets located in the West."

"The most spectacular incidents took place April 5, 1992, when in a wave of coordinated attacks members of the Mojahedin stormed Iranian diplomatic missions in New York City, Canada, Germany, France, Britain, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Australia. In New York, according to press reports, "five men armed with knives invaded the Iranian Mission to the United Nations, took three hostages, smashed furniture and with whom the NCR refuses to associate with include: the monarchists, notably the Iranian Constitutionalists and the Flag of Freedom Organization of Iran: and the main factions of the People's Fedayeen Guerrillas. The National Democratic Front, a leftist group that formed after the revolution, has remained a part of the Council, however. The "Revolutionary Leadership," a splinter group of the KDP-I, also has become a member."

"Rajavi's authoritarian style rendered the NCR incapable of becoming a truly democratic and representative council. Bani Sadr's version of their "difficult coexistence" in France, for example, is that Rajavi wanted total control. Other members of the council also realized that the Mojahedin did in fact have full control. The Mojahedin determined who could join ... who was worthy of being given ... voting rights .... Critics were either squeezed out of the National Council or silenced. In 1994, the KDP-I explained the rationale behind its early abandonment of the NCR: In view of our working experience with the Mojahedin between 1981 to 1986 and of their



attitude towards the Iranian democratic opposition since then, we consider the Mojahedin an anti-democratic and sectarian organization who cannot be trusted to be faithful to democratic aspirations of the Iranian people.”

“Although the NCR claims that it is a democratic organization, its practices do not sustain the rhetoric. For example, it is unclear what criteria are applied to evaluate whether or not a group or individual is eligible to become a member. Nor is it clear what standards are used to distinguish between group and individual memberships -- both of which have equal voting rights.”

The report adds that Masud Rajavi “complements his authoritarian leadership by fostering a personality cult that revolves primarily around himself and secondarily around his wife, Maryam.” It moves forward by citing from Professor Ervand Abrahamian who analyzed the factors underlying this situation:

By mid-1987, the Mojahedin organization had all the main attributes of a cult. It had its own revered leader whom it referred to formally as the “Guide” and informally as the “present Imam.” The Mojahedin had created a rigid hierarchy in which instructions flowed from above and the primary responsibility of the rank-and-file was to obey without asking too many questions. It had produced its own handbooks, censorship index, world outlook, historical interpretations and, of course, distinct ideology -- an ideology which, despite the organization’s denials, tried to synthesize the religious message of Shi’ism with the social science of Marxism... It had its own history, martyrs, hagiographies, honored families.... The organization had adopted its own dress code and physical appearance.... It had set up in Iraq its own communes, printing presses, offices, militias, training camps, barracks, clinics, schools, and even prisons, known as “re-education centers.”

“The Mojahedin themselves have described the repressive conditions of the NLA bases in Iraq. A former member of the MKO, Hadi Shams-Haeri, who broke away from the organization in 1991 after 15 years of membership, wrote an insider’s account of the group’s activities which was published in 1995 as a two-part series in the Persian language section of the Iran Times newspaper. Shams-Haeri said, for example, that members who tried to leave were jailed, held either in an NLA camp or placed in an Iraqi prison. Moreover, they were condemned to execution for their dissent, but the orders are stayed until the MKO “reaches victory” in Iran. Shams-Haeri said that members were considered members “for life.” He said they



were only allowed to read Mojahedin publications and that they were monitored by informers. He also said the Mojahedin forced couples and families to separate, arguing that the people should devote their love only to Masud and Maryam Rajavi."

"Those who monitor Mojahedin activities have also found evidence of controlled behavior. A Wall Street Journal reporter interviewed former members of the MKO this summer who described an authoritarian environment. These individuals, who refused to give their names for fear of retribution, claimed that the Mojahedin jailed or beat dissidents at MKO bases in Iraq. They also said that the Mojahedin forced couples living at MKO bases in Iraq to divorce, and, sent their children to live in MKO member homes in Europe. The NLA reportedly prohibits physical contact between the men and women stationed in Iraq. Another journalist who has reported on the Mojahedin described similar conduct. "Members living in the West are sometimes said to reside in communal houses, permitted little money of their own and kept on tightly controlled schedules. At Ashraf camp (in Iraq), one official identified himself as a "political officer" responsible for training the cadres."

In the end, the 1994 US State Department Report on the MKO deals with the external support of the terrorist group. It reads in part "Saddam Hussein has been one of the organization's primary financiers, providing weapons and, cash totaling an estimated hundreds of millions of dollars. Mojahedin offices in Europe, North America, the Middle East, and Australia are responsible for collecting donations from private citizens --especially Iranian expatriates -- for the MKO."

● US Department of State, "1994 US State Department Report on the People's Mojahedin of Iran," October 28, 1994; available at [http://www.archive.org/stream/developmentsinmio1994unit/developmentsinmio1994unit\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/developmentsinmio1994unit/developmentsinmio1994unit_djvu.txt), also at <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/child%20pages/USstatedept.htm#EXTERNAL%20SUPPORT>



## MKO on the US Country Reports on Terrorism



**T**itle 22 of the US Code, Section 2656f, which requires the Department of State to provide an annual report to Congress on terrorism, requires the report to include, inter alia, information on terrorist groups and umbrella groups under which any terrorist group falls, known to be responsible for the kidnapping or death of any US citizen during the preceding five years; groups known to be financed by state sponsors of terrorism about which Congress was notified during the past year in accordance with Section 6(j) of the Export Administration Act; and any other known international terrorist group that the Secretary of State determined should be the subject of the report.

The terrorist Mujahedin-e Khalq group had been listed as a terrorist entity in the US blacklist for about 15 years until it was delisted in 2012. Following is the description which recurred for years at the Country Reports on Terrorism with minor



differences, before the group was delisted from the US blacklist.

- Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK)

a.k.a. The National Liberation Army of Iran, The People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), National Council of Resistance (NCR), The National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), Muslim Iranian Students' Society

- Description

The MEK philosophy mixes Marxism and Islam. Formed in the 1960s, the organization was expelled from Iran after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, and its primary support came from the former Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein starting in the late 1980s. The MEK conducted anti-Western attacks prior to the Islamic Revolution. Since then, it has conducted terrorist attacks against the interests of the clerical regime in Iran and abroad. The MEK advocates the overthrow of the Iranian regime and its replacement with the group's own leadership.

- Activities

The group's worldwide campaign against the Iranian Government stresses propaganda and occasionally uses terrorism. During the 1970s, the MEK killed US military personnel and US civilians working on defense projects in Tehran and supported the takeover in 1979 of the US Embassy in Tehran. In 1981, the MEK detonated bombs in the head office of the Islamic Republic Party and the Premier's office, killing some 70 high-ranking Iranian officials, including Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, President Mohammad-Ali Rajaei, and Premier Mohammad-Javad Bahonar. Near the end of the 1980-1988 war with Iran, Baghdad armed the MEK with military equipment and sent it into action against Iranian forces.

In 1991, the MEK assisted the Government of Iraq in suppressing the Shia and Kurdish uprisings in southern Iraq and the Kurdish uprisings in the north. In April 1992, the MEK conducted near-simultaneous attacks on Iranian embassies and installations in 13 countries, demonstrating the group's ability to mount large-scale operations overseas.

In April 1999, the MEK targeted key military officers and assassinated the deputy chief of the Iranian Armed Forces General Staff. In April 2000, the MEK attempted to assassinate the commander of the Nasr Headquarters, Tehran's interagency



board responsible for coordinating policies on Iraq. The normal pace of anti-Iranian operations increased during “Operation Great Bahman” in February 2000, when the group launched a dozen attacks against Iran. One of those attacks included a mortar attack against the leadership complex in Tehran that housed the offices of the Supreme Leader and the President. In 2000 and 2001, the MEK was involved regularly in mortar attacks and hit-and-run raids on Iranian military and law enforcement units and Government buildings near the Iran-Iraq border, although MEK terrorism in Iran declined toward the end of 2001. After Coalition aircraft bombed MEK bases at the outset of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the MEK leadership ordered its members not to resist Coalition forces, and a formal cease-fire arrangement was reached in May 2003.

### ● Strength

Over 3,000 MEK members are currently confined to Camp Ashraf, the MEK’s main compound north of Baghdad, where they remain under the Geneva Convention’s “protected person” status and Coalition control. As a condition of the cease-fire agreement, the group relinquished its weapons, including tanks, armored vehicles, and heavy artillery. A significant number of MEK personnel have “defected” from the Ashraf group, and several dozen of them have been voluntarily repatriated to Iran.

### ● Location/Area of Operation

In the 1980s, the MEK’s leaders were forced by Iranian security forces to flee to France. On resettling in Iraq in 1987, almost all of its armed units were stationed in fortified bases near the border with Iran. Since Operation Iraqi Freedom, the bulk of the group is limited to Camp Ashraf, although an overseas support structure remains with associates and supporters scattered throughout Europe and North America.

### ● External Aid

Before Operation Iraqi Freedom, the group received all of its military assistance, and most of its financial support, from the former Iraqi regime. The MEK also has used front organizations to solicit contributions from expatriate Iranian communities.

● US Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism 2004, April 2005; available at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/45313.pdf>



## MKO Assisted Saddam Hussein in Suppressing Opposition within Iraq



In his remarks at On-the-Record Briefing on the Release of the Annual Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002 report on April 30, 2003, Ambassador Cofer Black, Coordinator for Counterterrorism, said MKO assisted the Saddam Hussein regime in suppressing opposition within Iraq, and performed internal security for the Iraqi regime.

QUESTION: What does the State Department think about the ceasefire that was signed between the MEK and the U.S., U.S. CENTCOM, in Iraq?

Since this group is still on the terrorist list, as I understand it, Americans are not supposed to deal with them at all. And that's always been kind of a -- there is a problem in Washington, D.C., because they keep an office open here.

So can you tell me how this squares with the MEK's terrorist status?

AMBASSADOR BLACK: Sure, I'll be happy to, happy to try. The Secretary has recommended that the President determine that the laws that apply to countries that support terrorism no longer apply to Iraq. The President's determination to provide greater flexibility in permitting certain types of trade with and assistance to Iraq; thus, we can treat Iraq like any other country not on the terrorist list.

I think it's important to underscore some facts here. MEK is designated by the U.S. Government as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. This organization mixes Islam and Marxism in their battle to establish what they claim would be a secular state in Iran.



Until the recent war in Iraq, they were allied with the government of Saddam Hussein and received most of their support from this regime. They have assisted the Hussein regime in suppressing opposition within Iraq, and performed internal security for the Iraqi regime. MEK, or as some recently referred to as the People's Mujahedin, has also attacked and killed Americans.

The MEK and its many aliases, including the political NCRI, are designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations. The United States Government does not negotiate with terrorists. MEK's opposition to the Iranian Government does not change the fact that they are a terrorist organization. We understand the agreement on the ground in the field is a prelude to the group's surrender. Commanders make tactical decisions to end conflict with enemy combatants successfully.

There's a lot of activity in various areas underway in Iraq -- of which this is one -- I would refer you to CENTCOM and their briefers to get better insight to the decision-making and the actions of our commanders, coalition commanders on the ground.

This is a pretty special group. They are a Foreign Terrorist Organization. They are not well liked in Iraq; they could not be put with the general prisoner population. They are following the orders of the coalition commanders, and their situation will be addressed in the coming days and weeks.



# Neocon IPC Tied to MKO

**Form 990** **Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax** **2005**  
Under section 501(c)(2), 527, or 4947(b)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code (except black box) (except trusts or private foundations)  
OMB No. 1545-0047  
Open to Public Inspection

Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service

**A.** For the 2005 calendar year, or tax year beginning 2005, and ending 2005, and ending

**B.** Check if applicable:  
☐ Address change  
☐ Name change  
☐ Initial return  
☐ Final return  
☒ Renewed return

**C.** Name of organization  
**The Iran Policy Committee**  
Number and street or P.O. box if mail is not delivered to street address Room/suite  
**811 Duke Street**  
City or town, state or country, and ZIP + 4  
**Alexandria, VA 22314**

**D.** Employer identification number  
**20-2885425**  
**E.** Telephone number  
**(703) 742-6517**

**F.** Faxing number  
☒ Call  
☐ Answer  
☐ Text (provide)

**Part IV Reason for Non-Private Foundation Status** (See pages 3 through 6 of the instructions.)  
The organization is not a private foundation because it is: (Please check only **ONE** applicable box.)

**10** ☐ A church, convention of churches, or association of churches. Section 170(b)(1)(A)(i).

**11** ☐ A school. Section 170(b)(1)(A)(ii). (Also complete Part V.)

**12** ☐ A hospital or a cooperative hospital service organization. Section 170(b)(1)(A)(iii).

**13** ☐ A federal, state, or local government or governmental unit. Section 170(b)(1)(A)(iv).

**14** ☐ A medical research organization operated in conjunction with a hospital. Section 170(b)(1)(A)(v). Enter the hospital's name, city, and state: \_\_\_\_\_

**15** ☐ An organization operated for the benefit of a college or university owned or operated by a governmental unit. Section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi). (Also complete the Support Schedule in Part IV-A.)

**11a** ☒ An organization that normally receives a substantial part of its support from a governmental unit.

**11b** ☐ A community trust. Section 170(b)(1)(A)(vii). (Also complete the Support Schedule in Part IV-A.)

**12** ☐ An organization that normally receives (1) more than 25% of its support from contributions, membership fees, and gross receipts from activities related to its exempt purpose, etc.; (2) more than 25% of its support from gross investment income and unrelated business taxable income (less section 511 tax) from businesses acquired by the organization after June 30, 1975. See section 508(a)(2). (Also complete the Support Schedule in Part IV-A.)

**13** ☐ An organization that is not controlled by any disqualified persons (other than foundation managers) and supports organizations described in (i) lines 5 through 12 above, or (ii) sections 501(c)(29), (30), or (31), if they meet the test of section 501(c)(29). Check the box that describes the type of supporting organization: ☐ Type 1 ☐ Type 2 ☐ Type 3

Provide the following information about the supported organizations. (See page 6 of the instructions.)

(a) Name(s) of supported organization(s) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Line number from above \_\_\_\_\_

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return, including accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete. I am an officer or director, or an individual with authority to sign this return, and I am not an officer or director, or an individual with authority to sign this return, of any organization that is a tax-exempt organization.

**Signature** **Raymond B. Tanter** **8-14-07**  
**Raymond B. Tanter, President**  
Type or print name and title

**Preparer's Signature** **Barry B. Butler** **8-14-07**  
**Barry B. Butler & Associates**  
Type or print name and title

**Preparer's address, and ZIP + 4** **811 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314**  
Phone no. **703-742-6517**  
Fax no. **703-742-6517**

Form 990 (2005)

The Iran Policy Committee (IPC) and the MKO are connected in more ways than just a neocon modus operandi of taking exile groups with little or no domestic legitimacy, using their (faulty) intelligence to build a case for war, and promoting them to spearhead regime change in Middle Eastern countries.

The IPC is made up of former US officials such as Raimond Tanter, a former member of US National Security Council and the current IPC president, Clare Lopez, former CIA agent and the current executive manager of the IPC, etc. A review of IPC's record shows it is a front organization at MKO's service.

IPC has filled out the form 990, used by tax-exempt organizations, nonexempt charitable trusts, and section 527 political organizations

to provide the IRS with the information required by section 6033, showing that the IPC is not a private organisation and thus is exempted from the income tax by the US Department of Treasury.

The document signed by Raimond Tanter, shows that the IPC's exemption is because it is "an organization that normally receives a part of its support from a governmental unit."

IPC members have openly supported the MKO and its formal website is filled with numerous pro-MKO news and pictures. Using governmental budget for a front organization to support the MKO while it was still on the FTO list, clearly proves the US is a state sponsor of terrorism.



## Some in the US Administration Wanted to Use MKO against Iran

Speaking to PBS TV channel on July 12, 2007, Richard Armitage, former US deputy Secretary of State, criticized the dual policies of US with regard to the



issue of terrorism and said after the US invasion to Iraq, "there were some in the administration who wanted to use the Mujahideen-e Khalq as a pressure point against Iran, and I can remember the national security adviser, Dr. [Condoleezza] Rice, being very specific about it, saying no, a terrorist group is a terrorist group."

Armitage added, "We wanted the U.S. military to disarm the MEK and contain them. ... And eventually we did disarm

the major weapons [from] the MEK. Then we ... engaged in a broad effort to try to resettle these people, but we were very unsuccessful in getting them settled in foreign lands."

He added the he lived in Iran for a year, when American people were killed by the MKO. He then concluded, "So from my point of view they were terrorists."

● PBS, "Interview Richard Armitage," July 12, 2007;  
available at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/showdown/interviews/armitage.html>



## Seven Plead Guilty to Providing Material Support to MKO

U.S. Attorney's Office  
Central District of California  
April 28, 2009  
(213) 894-2434

**S**ANTA ANA, CA—Seven people who were engaged in fundraising activities on behalf of a foreign terrorist organization pleaded guilty today to federal charges of providing material support to the group.

With jury selection in the case underway, the seven defendants each pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization and one count of actually providing material support to the group.

The terrorist organization at the center of this case is the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), which was designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the United States Secretary of State in October 1997. The designation has been renewed on multiple occasions and remains in effect today. Appearing this afternoon before United States

**Los Angeles Division**  
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Appearing this afternoon before United States District Judge David G. Carter, the seven defendants admitted that they knowingly acted to support the activities of the MEK by conducting money-raising MEK activities and soliciting money from fundraising donors at public locations, such as Los Angeles International Airport. The various donors were told that they were supporting a charity called the Committee for Human Rights (CHR), which was commonly referred to as the Committee for Human Rights in Iran. However, CHR was simply a "front organization" for MEK and raising operations in the United States, and CHR was using the MEK as a front to raise money to support MEK operations and activities, including its terrorist activities.

"These defendants raised money at locations like LAX on behalf of the MEK, which is a terrorist organization," said United States Attorney Thomas P. O'Brien. "We cannot allow any terrorist organization to maintain on our shores or to steal money from our own citizens so that they can finance their own terrorist operations. Terrorists anywhere pose a significant security risk to the United States."

Most of the mission of United States Customs and Border Protection is to investigate fundraising activities of terrorist groups, some that are designated as terrorist organizations, and to take the necessary action to prevent them from doing so. This is the mission of the FBI in Los Angeles. This is why these are the result of their work and prosecution by the FBI and the U.S. Attorney's Office in Los Angeles.

This case began in March 2004, when a federal grand jury in Los Angeles indicted the seven defendants. A District Court in Los Angeles dismissed the indictment. On the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, the case was reversed, and the case returned to Los Angeles and was eventually assigned to Judge Carter in Santa Ana.

The seven defendants who pleaded guilty today are:

- Raza Rahmani, of Vienna, Virginia, 48;
- Jareem Moazzamzadeh, of Los Angeles, 38;
- Javad Karami, of Los Angeles, 31;
- Hossein Kader Afshar, of Houston, Texas, 37;
- Hossein Kader, of Los Angeles, 34;
- Hamed Taj, of Santa Ana, 35;
- Hamed Taj, of Santa Ana, 35.

As a result of the guilty pleas, each defendant faces a statutory maximum penalty of ten years in federal prison. Judge Carter's indictment in September 2004.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force, which includes agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the California Department of Justice and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.



District Judge David O. Carter, the seven defendants admitted that they knowingly raised funds to support the activities of the MEK by collecting money from MEK supporters and soliciting money from unwitting donors at public locations, such as Los Angeles International Airport. The unwitting donors were told that they were supporting a charity called the Committee for Human Rights (CHR), which was sometimes referred to as the Committee for Human Rights in Iran. However, CHR was simply a "front organization" for MEK fund-raising operations in the United States, and CHR was being used by the MEK as a front to raise money to support MEK operations and activities, including its terrorist activities.

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"Part of the mission of the Joint Terrorism Task Force is to investigate fund-raising activities of terrorist groups, some that are disguised as charitable organizations," said Salvador Hernandez, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI in Los Angeles. "Today's guilty pleas are the result of hard work and perseverance by investigators and prosecutors, and should send a message that monetary support of a designated terrorist group is more than a financial transaction, but a tangible link to terrorist organizations."

This case began in March 2001, when a federal grand jury in Los Angeles indicted the seven defendants. A District Court in Los Angeles dismissed the indictment, but the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the lower court's ruling in 2006, and the United States Supreme Court declined to review the matter. In February 2007, the case returned to Los Angeles and was eventually assigned to Judge Carter in Santa Ana.

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Roya Rahmani, of Vienna, Virginia, 48;

Alireza Mohammadmoradi, of Los Angeles, 38;

Moustafa Ahmady, of Los Angeles, 54;



Hossein Kalani Afshari, of Mission Viejo, 52;  
Hassan Rezaie, of Los Angeles, 54;  
Navid Taj, of Santa Monica, 58; and  
Mohammad Omidvar, of Corona, 54.

As a result of the guilty pleas, each defendant faces a statutory maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison. Judge Carter is scheduled to sentence the defendants on August 10. The investigation in this case was conducted by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force, which includes agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, IRS-Criminal Investigation and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

● The US Attorney's Office Central District of California, "Seven Plead Guilty to Providing Material Support to Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization," April 28, 2009; available at <http://www.justice.gov/usao/cac/Pressroom/pr2009/056.html>



## | CIA Details MKO's Treasons during Iran-Iraq War |

A report by the Office of the United States Director of Central Intelligence dated June 23, 1988, reveals a part of MKO's high treasonous acts against the Iranian nation during the 1980-1988 Iraqi imposed war on Iran.

"The Mujahedin-e Khalq (People's Mujahedin) is an anti-Khomeini, anti-western group that advocates dismantling the revolutionary regime and replacing it with a Marxist-based program of Islamic socialism. It formed the National Liberation Army (NLA) a year ago and has its headquarters, training facilities, base camps, and clandestine radio stations in Iraq.

It claims 15000 fighters but probably has some 3000-6000 equipped with small arms and some captured Iranian tanks and artillery supplied by Iraq. The group was initially organized as a guerrilla force and probably still is not capable of more than hit-and-run attacks of infiltration operations without substantial Iraqi support.

Its exploits are highly exaggerated in print and film by the Mujahedin-e Khalq's aggressive propaganda offices in Europe and the US.

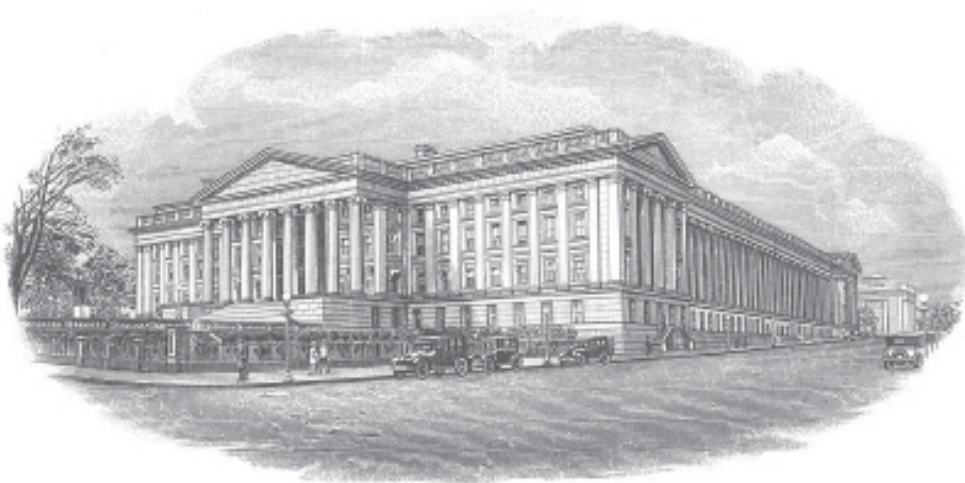
### IRAN-IRAQ: The Capture of Mehran

Iraqi forces were indispensable in the successful attack the National Liberation Army - the combat arm of the dissident Iranian Mujahedin-e Khalq -- made on Mehran Sunday... Iraqi aircraft, armor, and artillery units strongly supported the dissidents, and the advance of Iraqi tanks almost certainly forced the Iranian withdrawal.

Comment: The victory, though minor, is another setback for Tehran and means problems for the already stretched Iranian ground forces. Rather than risk facing an Iranian counterattack, the national Liberation Army probably will withdraw from the city it captured. Baghdad is likely to continue helping the dissidents, who survive primarily on Iraqi support and on publicity from their exaggerated claims of military success. Their association with Iraqi probably will continue to alienate most Iranians and impede expansion of their limited network of sympathizers in Iranian cities."

● Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), June 23, 1988,  
available at [http://216.12.139.91/docs/DOC\\_0001072431/DOC\\_0001072431.pdf](http://216.12.139.91/docs/DOC_0001072431/DOC_0001072431.pdf)





## | MKO on the Specially Designated Nationals List |

**T**he Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is an agency of the United States Department of the Treasury under the auspices of the Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. OFAC administers and enforces economic and trade sanctions based on U.S. foreign policy and national security goals against targeted foreign states, organizations, and individuals.

As part of its enforcement efforts, OFAC publishes a list of individuals and companies owned or controlled by, or acting for or on behalf of, targeted countries.



It also lists individuals, groups, and entities, such as terrorists and narcotics traffickers designated under programs that are not country-specific. Collectively, such individuals and companies are called "Specially Designated Nationals" or "SDNs." Their assets are blocked and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from dealing with them. In 2003, MKO along with its front organizations, such as National Council of Resistance of Iran was added to the list and the OFAC clarified that "the National Council of Resistance (NCR) and People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI) are aliases of MEK."

It is worth mentioning that, despite the prohibition, some former US officials have received big bucks from MKO in exchange for their speeches on behalf of the terrorist group, which prompted an investigation by the US Treasury Department to see whether the speaking fees were being paid by MKO.

Designation of National Council of Resistance in Iran, National Council of Resistance and Peoples Mujahedin of Iran under Executive Order 13224







## FROM THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In support of a State Department amendment to the designation of Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has listed the National Council of Resistance in Iran (NCRI) -- previously listed as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) -- as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) under Executive Order 13224 and has clarified that the National Council of Resistance (NCR) and People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI) are aliases of MEK. The listing also clarifies that the designation includes the U.S. representative offices of NCRI and the U.S. press office of PMOI. These organizations have been added to the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list, effectively freezing all assets and properties and prohibiting transactions between U.S. persons and these organizations.

● US Department of the Treasury, "Designation of National Council of Resistance in Iran, National Council of Resistance and Peoples Mujahedin of Iran under Executive Order 13224," August 15, 2003; available at <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/js664.aspx>





## MKO's History Studded with Anti-Western Activity

A CIA Intelligence Research Paper, dated July 1993, reports that the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran--the MEK, for short--"is the largest and most active Iranian dissident group. Its primary goal is the overthrow of the Iranian Government, after which it would seek to establish a nontheocratic republic.... The MEK's history, marked by violence and terrorism, belies its claim to uphold democratic ideals. Formed in the early 1960s, its origins reflect both Marxist and Islamic influences, and its history is studded with anti-Western activity."

The MEK "collaborated with Ayatollah Khomeini to overthrow the former Shah of Iran. As part of that struggle, they assassinated at least six American citizens, supported the takeover of the U.S. embassy, and opposed the release of American hostages." "[In 1972] the MEK exploded time bombs at more than a dozen





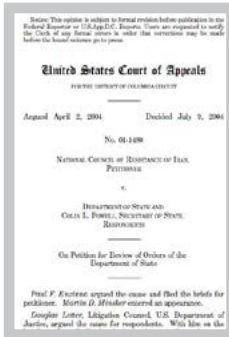
sites throughout Tehran, including the Iran-American Society, ... and the offices of Pepsi Cola and General Motors. From 1972-75 ... the Mojahedin continued their campaign of bombings, damaging such targets as the offices of Pan-American Airlines, Shell Oil Company, and British organizations." "The MEK has been unable since the mid-1980s to mount terrorist operations inside Iran on the same scale as its earlier activities because of government repression and the group's lack of popular support." "In June 1987 the MEK formed a military wing, the National Liberation Army of Iran (NLA), which is located in eastern Iraq along the central Iran-Iraq border area." "In April 1992, the MEK used its sympathizers in the United States, Canada, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway,

Denmark and Australia to launch virtually simultaneous attacks on Iranian embassies and installations." In March 1994 Reuters and the BBC reported that the MEK "said its fighters attacked and disabled 14 oil pipelines in the north of Khuzistan province during military operations" and took credit for "25 other ... attacks it said took place in Iran between March 8 and March 18."

"The MEK looks to expatriate Iranians who are not members of the organization for financial support and manpower." "Baghdad is the MEK's primary supporter and closest ally." "The MEK has offices and members throughout Europe, North America, the Middle East and in Australia. These offices are responsible for collecting donations from private citizens--especially Iranian expatriates--for the MEK and for organizing activities such as demonstrations to show support for the MEK."



## | MKO and NCRI, One and the Same |



After NCRI was designated as an alias of the MKO by the U.S. Department of State in 1999, NCRI submitted voluminous materials to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit that purported to demonstrate that it was sufficiently independent of MKO that it could not be considered an alias of that organization.

NCRI argued that US Secretary of State's conclusion that NCRI is an alias of MKO lacks substantial support in the administrative record. The Court then concluded that the Secretary's designation of NCRI as an alias of MKO "does not lack substantial support and ... is neither arbitrary,

capricious, nor otherwise not in accordance with law."

"After an extensive investigation of MEK and NCRI, the FBI reported to the State Department that 'it is the unanimous view of the FBI personnel who are involved in and familiar with the FBI's investigation of the [MEK] that the NCRI is not a separate organization, but is instead, and has been, an integral part of the MEK at all relevant times,' the report reads in part. "Contrary to NCRI's portrayal of itself as an umbrella organization, of which the MEK was just one member, the FBI concluded that it is NCRI that is 'the political branch' of the MEK."

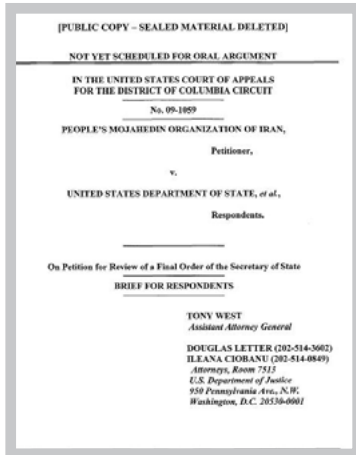
"This conclusion was based in large part on evidence gathered from the search — executed in December 2001 pursuant to a valid warrant — of a house in Falls Church, Virginia apparently used as office space by both NCRI and MEK. There, the FBI discovered NCRI and MEK materials 'commingled together, and not separated,' including bank records, signed blank checks, MEK propaganda, NCRI publications, travel documents, and letterhead which listed the same French address for each organization. Id. Attach. at 2–4. Crucially, among the recovered documents was a schematic breakdown of the 'Iranian Resistance,' which described NCRI as 'The Political Branch' of the movement."

"Additionally, earlier investigations of MEK and NCRI had revealed that the two organizations shared an essentially unitary leadership structure. The overall head of MEK, Massoud Rajavi, also leads NCRI. And Rajavi's wife, Maryam Rajavi, was selected by NCRI to be Iran's President-in-Exile."

● US Court of Appeals, July 9, 2004; available at [http://www.cadc.uscourts.gov/internet/opinions.nsf/DEA8AF57149E1E2085256F82006D45DE/\\$file/01-1480a.pdf](http://www.cadc.uscourts.gov/internet/opinions.nsf/DEA8AF57149E1E2085256F82006D45DE/$file/01-1480a.pdf)



# MKO Protested Nixon's Iran Visit



## 2. The History Of The PMOI

The PMOI seeks to overthrow the current Iranian regime through its military wing, the National Liberation Army ("NLA"), and its political front, the National Council of Resistance of Iran ("NCRI"). Administrative Summary ("A.S.")3. The PMOI was founded in 1963, by a group of college-educated Iranian Marxists who opposed the country's pro-western ruler, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The group participated in the 1979 Islamic revolution that replaced the Shah with a Shiite Islamist regime led by the Ayatollah Khomeini. In 1981, the group was driven from its bases on the Iran-Iraq border and resettled in Paris, where it began supporting Iraq in its eight-year war

against Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran. In 1986, after France recognized the Iranian regime, the PMOI moved its headquarters to Iraq, which facilitated its numerous terrorist activities in Iran.

During the 1970's, the PMOI had staged terrorist attacks inside Iran and killed several U.S. military personnel and civilians working on defense projects in Tehran. In 1972, the PMOI set off bombs in Tehran at the U.S. Information Service office, the Iran-American Society, and the offices of several U.S. companies to protest the visit of President Nixon to Iran. In 1973, the PMOI assassinated the deputy chief of the U.S. Military Mission in Tehran, and bombed several Western businesses, including Shell Oil. In 1974, the PMOI set off bombs in Tehran at the offices of U.S. companies to protest the visit of then U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger. In 1975, the PMOI assassinated two U.S. military officers who were members of the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group in Tehran. In 1976, the PMOI assassinated two U.S. citizens who were employees of Rockwell International in Tehran. Moreover, in 1979, the group claimed responsibility for the murder of an American Texaco executive. In a coordinated series of actions in April 1992, PMOI members launched simultaneous attacks on Iranian diplomatic and consular missions in 13 cities around the world, including against the Iranian mission to the United Nations in New York.



Notice: This opinion is subject to formal revision before publication in the Federal Reporter or U.S.App.D.C. Reports. Users are requested to notify the Clerk of any formal errors in order that corrections may be made before the bound volumes go to press.

# United States Court of Appeals

FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT

Argued April 2, 2004

Decided July 9, 2004

No. 01 1480

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF RESISTANCE OF IRAN,  
PETITIONER

v.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND  
COLIN L. POWELL, SECRETARY OF STATE,  
RESPONDENTS

On Petition for Review of Orders of the  
Department of State

*Paul F. Enzima* argued the cause and filed the briefs for petitioner. *Martin D. Minsker* entered an appearance.

*Douglas Letter*, Litigation Counsel, U.S. Department of Justice, argued the cause for respondents. With him on the brief was *Peter D. Keisler*, Assistant Attorney General.

In ensuing years, PMOI activity shifted to attacks within Iran and against Iranian government officials. PMOI members were armed by then Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, and they maintained significant military forces in several camps in Iraq near the Iran-Iraq border.

As this Court has already recognized, the PMOI carried out numerous terrorist attacks in Iran. See *People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran v. Department of State* ("PMOI II"), 327 F.3d 1238, 1243 (D.C. Cir. 2003) (summarizing various terrorist activities that the PMOI has admitted to committing). In June 1998, the PMOI was implicated in a series of bombing and mortar attacks in Iran that killed at least 15 people and injured several others. A.S.4. Further, the PMOI assassinated the former Iranian Minister of Prisons in 1998, and murdered the Iranian Deputy Chief of the Armed Forces in 1999. In February 2000, the PMOI fired mortars at

the Presidential Palace in Tehran, killing one and injuring six individuals. The PMOI also launched mortars into a residential district in Tehran, injuring four people and damaging property in March 2000. In fact, the PMOI acknowledges in its Petition that the organization carried out terrorist attacks, which it styles as military operations, against Iran until the summer of 2001.

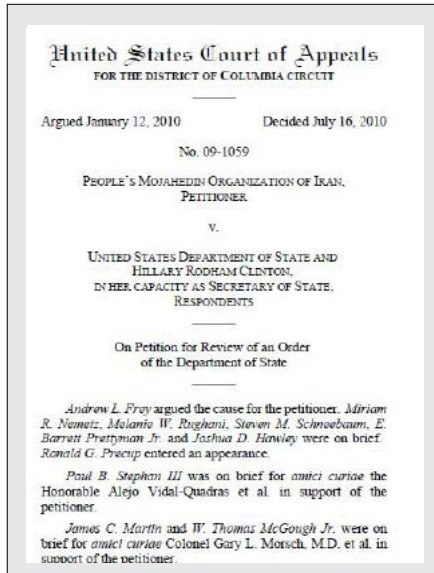
[CLASSIFIED INFORMATION REDACTED]

Further, according to an indictment returned by a grand jury in the United States District Court for the Central District of California in 2007, to which the defendants have conditionally pled guilty, between 1994 and early 2001, PMOI fund-raisers at airports and other public areas in the United States claimed to unwitting donors that they were raising money for victims of natural disasters, victims of torture, orphans, refugees, or starving children, when in fact, they were raising money for the operations and activities of the PMOI, including its terrorist activities.

● US Court of Appeals, October 23, 2009; available at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/153463.pdf>



## MKO Trained Female Suicide Bombers in Karbala



In January 2010, MKO challenged its FTO status before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the fourth time. During the briefing in this case, the U.S. Secretary of State provided unclassified record with formerly classified materials to the court in order to sustain the MKO listing.

"Among the disclosures in the declassified material: "the MEK trained females at Camp Ashraf in Iraq to perform suicide attacks in Karbala"; "the MEK solicits money under the false pretext of humanitarian aid to the Iranian population"; "an August 2008 U.S. Intelligence Community Terrorist Threat Assessment, clearly states that the MEK retains a limited capability to engage in terrorist activity or terrorism"; "[t]he MEK publicly renounced violence in 2001, but limited intelligence reporting

indicates that the group has not ended military operations, repudiated violence, or completely or voluntarily disarmed"; "[t]he [intelligence community] assesses that although there has not been a confirmed terrorist attack by the MEK since the organization surrendered to Coalition Forces in 2003, the MEK retains a limited capability and the intent to use violence to achieve its political goals"; and "UN inspectors say that much of the information provided to the UN by the MEK about Iran's nuclear program has a political purpose and has been wrong." Suppl. Admin. R. (filed Oct. 27, 2009)."

United States Court of Appeals District of Columbia Circuit, July 16, 2010; available at [http://www.cadc.uscourts.gov/internet/opinions.nsf/8390067BF1E1E876852578070070EB87/\\$file/09-1059-1255582.pdf](http://www.cadc.uscourts.gov/internet/opinions.nsf/8390067BF1E1E876852578070070EB87/$file/09-1059-1255582.pdf)





Cryptome is a digital library host created in 1996 by American independent scholars and architects John Young and Deborah Natsios. The digital library functions as a repository for information about freedom of speech, cryptography, spying, and surveillance. According to its mission statement, “Cryptome welcomes documents for publication that are prohibited by governments worldwide, in particular material on freedom of expression, privacy, cryptology, dual-use technologies, national security, intelligence, and secret governance—open, secret and classified documents—but not limited to those. Cryptome hosts over 70,000 files, including suppressed photographs of U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq, lists of people believed to be MI6 agents, detailed maps of government facilities (based upon publicly available mapping and aerial photography), a list of Stasi workers at the time of its dissolution on December 8, 1989, and 4,000 photos of the Iraq War.





## Canada Denied Entry of MKO-Linked Individuals

...

**C**BP Denies Entry to 25 Canadians With Possible Links to a Terrorist Organization. According to BTS reporting, on 19 November, at the Alexandria Bay Port of Entry, CBP officers denied entry to 25 Canadians applying to enter the U.S. in order to attend a protest rally in Washington, D.C. sponsored by the Council for Freedom and Democracy in Iran. Reportedly, the 25 individuals had possible links to the Mujahedin e-Khalq (MEK)—a known terrorist organization. (BTS Daily Operations Report, 20 November 04; HSOC 4444-04)

● US Homeland Security, "Homeland Security Operations Morning Brief," November 22, 2004; available at <http://cryptome.org/hsomb/hsomb.htm>



## Iraq Associated with Terrorists such as MKO

Following its defeat in the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq's approach to dealing with the United States was to resort to terrorism. To achieve its goals, Iraq associated with various terrorist groups. One was the Iranian opposition group Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MEK), that had ties to Ramzi Yousef, who had entered New York in 1992 using an Iraqi passport, and was later convicted in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. The MEK reportedly also assisted Osama Bin Laden. The MEK reportedly assisted Osama Bin Laden's escape to Eastern Iran after the attacks of September 2001 ,11. Eastern Iran is controlled by a Sunni Muslim enclave that was under heavy Iraqi influence.

...

130. Those locations were the Nahrawan camp at the old Diyala Bridge, southeast of Baghdad and Tell Aswad Ridhwaniya, northwest of Baghdad. The Mukhabarat (Iraqi Intelligence Agency) runs the training facilities at both locations. Relocation occurred due to publicity surrounding Salman Pak, where kamikaze, explosives, and assassination training included "foreigners" said to be Palestinians and Iranians from the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK). Iraq supports the anti-Iranian terrorist group, MEK, to which Ramzi Yousef was connected due to his Iraqi background. Bin Laden also reportedly is being sheltered by the Iranian guerilla fighters of the MEK in the eastern portion of Iran. He and close associates reportedly crossed into Iran using smuggling routes with the help of the MEK, and took refuge in caves said to be more extensive and sophisticated than those of the Tora Bora mountain chain in Afghanistan. The MEK, who are fighting a war against the Shiite government of Tehran, are minority Sunnis. They maintain good relations with certain Afghan and Pakistani tribes. When the Iranian government cracks down on the group, MEK members take refuge in the Pakistani or Afghani tribal areas.

● Cryptome, "In the United States District Court for the District of Columbia," August 29, 2003; available at <http://cryptome.org/oneill-v-iraq.htm>





## Helping MKO a Total Mockery of the So-Called War on Terror

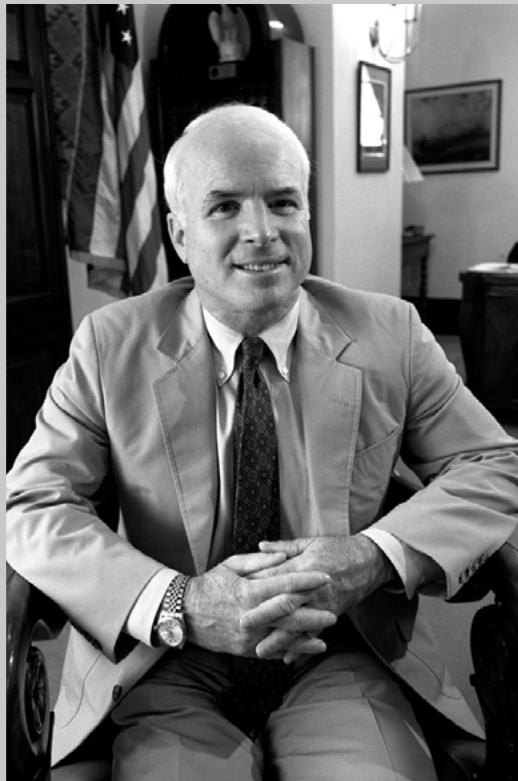
Dennis J. Kucinich, former US Representative for Ohio's 10th District, delivered a speech during House debate HR 282, the "Iran Freedom and Support Act," in which he criticized the US government's support for MKO.

... HR 282 supports anti-government advocates in Iran promoting regime change. This is highly problematic. While an important amendment offered by Congressman Blumenauer was adopted into this bill during markup, to prohibit U.S. assistance to groups that are on the State Department's list of terrorist organizations, or have been on that list for the last 4 years, there are ways around this. For example, according to a Newsweek article from February 14, 2005, the US has been recruiting individuals from the MEK, a group currently labeled as "terrorist" by the State Department, who have agreed to form a new group with the same mission of the MEK: regime change in Iran. These individuals have been conducting military activity in Iran with the United States' support. I just want to remind everyone that the MEK was the group responsible for the U.S. Embassy takeover in Tehran in 1979. The MEK also had a camp in Iraq where Osama bin Laden's first fighters were reportedly trained. The MEK also trained and supported Taliban fighters. Now we're recruiting help from members of the MEK, which makes a total mockery of this so-called "War on Terror."

● Dennis J. Kucinich, "Kucinich speaks out against house bill that lays the ground work for war," United States of America Congressional Record, April 26, 2006; available at <http://www.archive.is/kr8C>



## John McCain's Concern over MKO's Lobbying the US Congress



John McCain wrote William Sessions, the Director of the FBI, two times (December 5, 1992 and June 9, 1993) asking for an update of a 1987 report he had received from Senate security on the MKO.

"We must be extremely careful not to support terrorism in the name of antiterrorism, Iranian or Iraqi front groups in the name of democracy, or extremist opposition groups in the name of human rights. We must not take sides between factions, and we must not encourage violence in the name of democracy," said McCain.

He added that the MKO group has become a major "lobbying group." "It has lobbied members of this body and the House. It has lobbied the President elect and his wife. It has conducted funding raising efforts throughout the United States, and it is actively lobbying members of the Iranian-American community."

"The report I have received, however, raises serious questions about the real nature of the

PMOI. It indicates that the PMOI is derived from a violent left wing group that carried out the assassination of American officers and civilians in Iran before the fall of the Shah," he added. Similarly, a recent report by the Congressional Research Service raises similar questions about the PMOI. The State Department refuses to meet with this group because of its heritage of extremism.



"But, Mr. President, we cannot afford to have a situation where groups can lobby Congress and the American people in the name of democracy, human rights, freedom, and the rule of law whose true nature is very different or who have undisclosed ties to foreign governments, those who use violence, and those who use terrorism. We cannot afford to allow such groups to raise funds in the United States without the Congress and the American people knowing their true nature."

What follows is the text of McCain's letter to Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation:

U.S. Senate,

Washington, DC, December 15, 1992.

William S. Sessions,

Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, DC 20535.

Dear Mr. Sessions: I am concerned that the People's Mujahedin-E-Khalq is playing an active role in lobbying the U.S. Congress, and in presenting its views on Iran, under conditions where members have no way to learn the history of this organization. I am particularly concerned with its history of violence against American citizens, its role in terrorism, and its financial ties to Iraq.

Back in 1987, the FBI developed an open source review of this group which provides strong indications that the People's Mujahedin-E-Khalq is a terrorist movement that has participated in the assassination of American citizens and receives most of its funds from Iraq. I have attached a copy of the report to this letter.

I would be grateful if you could have your staff review this report, and provide me with an updated version that could be circulated to members of the Senate and House. If possible, I would like to have such an update no later than January 15, 1993, so that the report could be circulated to members of the new Congress when it comes back into session.

Sincerely,

John McCain,

U.S. Senator.



In his second letter, McCain wrote, "it is my continuing concern that, due to a lack of official information on its ideology and history, representatives of People's Mujahidin of Iran [PMOI] are lobbying the United States Congress without Members of Congress being aware of whether this organization does or does not have terrorist connections."

"In order to shed some light on the activities of the PMOI, I have asked the Federal Bureau of Investigation to update the review of open sources on the PMOI that it first issued in 1987. Although the Director of the FBI has indicated a willingness to provide me information in a classified briefing, thus far, my efforts to obtain an update of the 1987 report have been rebuffed."

Following is McCain's second letter to William Sessions:

United States Senate,

June 9, 1993.

William S. Sessions,

Federal Bureau of Investigation,

Washington, DC.

Dear Director Sessions: After reviewing your letter of May 11, 1993, I do not believe that a briefing would be a meaningful or suitable response to my original requests.

I fully recognize the need to protect the rights of Americans and foreign nationals in this country, and to avoid prejudicing an ongoing investigation. At the same time, I see little merit in the FBI's refusal to update an existing report, and a great deal of bureaucratic obfuscation.

As I said in my letter to you of January 25, we cannot deal with this issue through classified briefings. These may be helpful in briefing individual members, but they do not serve the purpose of informing the Congress or the American people.

Let me repeat, there is no question that we have every ethical, moral, and strategic reason to encourage Iraqi and Iranian democratic movements, to halt the arms build-up in Iraq and Iran, and to do everything we can to pressure Iraq and Iran to adopt the rule of law and protect the human rights of all their citizens.

Yet, anyone can use the rhetoric of democracy. Anyone can hide behind the flag of human rights. Anyone can attempt to exploit our opposition to the current regimes in Iraq and Iran, and our ethical and moral beliefs. This is particularly true in two countries filled



with political, ethnic, and religious turmoil and without real democratic traditions. It is particularly true because Iran is actively arming and encouraging Iraqi groups that oppose Saddam Hussein, and Saddam Hussein is actively arming Iranian groups that oppose Rafsanjani.

We must be extremely careful not to support terrorism in the name of anti-terrorism, front groups in the name of democracy, or extremist opposition groups in the name of human rights. We must not take sides between factions, and we must not encourage violence in the name of democracy. This is why I first wrote you in December, 1992 to ask for an update of the FBI's 1987 report on the People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI).

The fact remains that the PMOI has become a major lobbying group. It has lobbied members of the Senate and the House. It has lobbied the President and his wife. It has conducted fund raising efforts throughout the United States, and it is actively lobbying members of the Iranian-American community. The fact remains that some U.S. government officials repeatedly give background briefings attacking this group while other U.S. government officials meet with its representatives on a very different basis.

I have just received another report on this group, which seems to be from a hostile Iranian group and which has been widely circulated to members of Congress. I am attaching this to my letter, and while I have no way to evaluate its contents, there is no doubt that serious questions still exist about the real nature of the PMOI.

The fact remains that the U.S. government must not become the unwitting tool of any political group that engages in any of the following heritage, belief, or actions that have been listed in the FBI's 1987 report and recent reporting by the Congressional Research Service:

Attacks on American citizens, other foreigners, and Iranian citizens and officials during the time of the Shah.

Involvement in a civil war in which it took a strong anti-American and anti-Western stance, was a more extreme left wing movement than Iran's Tudeh Communist Party, and regularly used terrorism and assassination during the struggle for power following the Shah.

Involvement in a Saddam Hussein funded and supported military movement attacking Iran during the Iran-Iraq War, and in maintaining such a military movement on Iraqi soil during and after the invasion of Kuwait.

Continuing involvement in a low level struggle of terrorism and counter-terrorism with the Rafsanjani government in Iran.

Continuing to accept funds, support, bases, and arms from the Saddam Hussein



government in Iraq.

Soliciting political support and funds from the Congress, American citizens, and Iranian exiles on U.S. soil under the guise of being a democratic coalition and human rights advocate when it remains an extreme leftist group whose secret agenda opposes American values and the security of Israel.

The only way that PMOI involvement in these activities can be realistically assessed is for the FBI to provide an unclassified report that addresses each of these points.

If, upon further investigation, the FBI finds that the PMOI has not engaged in any of the activities mentioned above, then it has more credibility as a legitimate democratic movement. It should be free of the kind of indirect allegations made by the State Department and other executive agencies. The fact remains that no group operating in American politics should be forced to live in limbo, or in a climate where U.S. officials informally criticize it, if it has not engaged in any wrongdoing.

If the facts are uncertain, then the Congress, the American people, the media, and Iranian exiles in America deserve to know the truth about such uncertainties, and make their own judgments. If the PMOI has engaged in the activities noted above, then we must take appropriate judicial action and we must not treat it as a legitimate opposition to Iran's current government until it has fundamentally changed its character and leadership.

To put it bluntly, your response on this issue to date reminds me of another Director that denied the existence of the Mafia for nearly two decades, and allowed it to become a critical law enforcement problem. It reminds me that that same Director had to be forced by Presidential and Congressional pressure to come to grips with the need to protect the civil rights of Afro-Americans and other minorities. The Bureau has an unfortunate history of rushing into situations where it can get favorable publicity and dodging serious problems.

I repeat my continuing caveat on the kind of data the U.S. government should provide. We must never do anything to abridge the First Amendment rights of any group, foreign or domestic. We must continue the struggle for democracy and human rights. We must encourage and support every group that truly advocates freedom and the rule of law that opposes any regime that denies such progress, whether it is Iran, Iraq, or anywhere else in the world.

But, the fact remains that we cannot afford to have a situation where groups can lobby Congress and the American people in the name of democracy, human rights, freedom, and the rule of law whose true nature is very different or who have undisclosed ties to



foreign governments, those who use violence, and those who use terrorism. We cannot afford to allow such groups to raise funds in the United States without the Congress and the American people knowing their true nature.

We have already seen in the case of the World Trade Center bombing that it does no good to dodge these issues, rush to judgment in a flurry of media events, and then watch an uninformed media, public, and Congress start to assign the blame against Arab or Islamic groups in general, Hamas, Iran, or Iraq.

With the end of the Cold War, it has become even more important to identify real terrorists and make it clear when the government does not feel groups support terrorist actions or act as fronts for them. There also is little point in maintaining a list of terrorist countries and then failing to identify the terrorist organizations that actually operate in the United States.

Quite frankly, this situation is absurd. The FBI has already written an unclassified report on the group in question. The United States government repeatedly takes background positions, and is supposed to be in the middle of a major exercise to open up the process of government and reduce unnecessary classification.

You have ample tools available to update your existing report. As I have noted in earlier correspondence, you have already shown that it is possible to summarize the results of U.S. government investigations without disclosing sensitive sources and methods.

I would like to resolve this issue without legislation or confrontation, but I do not believe that further delay and correspondence is a substitute for action. Your office has already repeatedly delayed its responses to my previous letters, in one case by nearly three months, and even initially denied that the FBI was the source of a report that it had passed to Senate security.

As a result, I would like to have your formal agreement or non-agreement to provide the requested update no later than June 24, 1993. If necessary, please coordinate this response with Attorney General Reno and Secretary of State Christopher.

Sincerely,

John McCain,

United States Senator.

● The Library of Congress, "The need for public information on the People's Mujahedin of Iran," June 29, 1993; available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/F?r103:4:./temp/~r103iTA5Hs:e0>



## MKO an Excuse for US Invasion of Iraq



The Bush administration cited Saddam's support of MKO as a reason for the US invasion to Iraq. When the Bush administration sought to justify its attack on Iraq in 2003 by accusing Saddam Hussein of being a sponsor of "international terrorism", one of its prime examples was Iraq's "sheltering terrorist groups including the Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO)".

Saddam's support for international terrorism is detailed in the formal website of the White House. There, it states, "Iraq shelters terrorist groups including the Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MEK), which has used terrorist violence against Iran and in the 1970s was responsible for killing several U.S. military personnel and U.S. civilians."

Addressing the Security Council on February 5, 2003, US Secretary of State Collin Powell presented the UNSC with what he called "solid" evidence that showed Iraq still has not complied with resolutions calling for it to disarm and concluded that the U.S. will not leave Saddam Hussein alone. Collin emphasized that

● The White House, "Saddam Hussein's Support for International Terrorism," available at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/iraq/decade/sects.html>

● UN News Centre, "Powell presents US case to Security Council of Iraq's failure to disarm," February 5, 2003; available at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=6079&Cr=iraq&Cr1=inspect#.UkvbGINcH4Y>



## Ex-members Feel Bitter Hatred towards MKO

**K**enneth R. Timmerman wrote in a piece On June 2011 that former MKO members have painted a “a harsh picture of repression” in MKO camps.

The escapees – referred to as “defectors” in the State Department cables – painted a harsh picture of repression in the MEK camp, and claimed that the group’s leader had issued standing orders that anyone caught trying to escape should be immediately executed.

“Many of the defectors alleged psychological and physical harm at the hands of the MEK, including solitary confinement in MEK jails in Ashraf,” one cable states.

Some of the MEK escapees said they had been “lured from Iran with promises of study abroad opportunities” or “by offers of travel abroad.” Others were Iranian POWs captured by the Iraqis during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war who were sent to Camp Ashraf with a promise they would soon be repatriated to Iran or resettled in a third country.

The defectors “reaffirmed existing perceptions of the MEK as a cult-like organization that thrives on maintaining control of its members and those lured to Ashraf under false pretenses,” the cable states.

● Kenneth R. Timmerman, “State Department Documents Expose Iranian Terror Group,” New English Review, June 2011, available at [http://www.newenglishreview.org/custpage.cfm/frm/90615/sec\\_id/90615](http://www.newenglishreview.org/custpage.cfm/frm/90615/sec_id/90615)



## MKO Defectors on Life in Ashraf and Resettlement

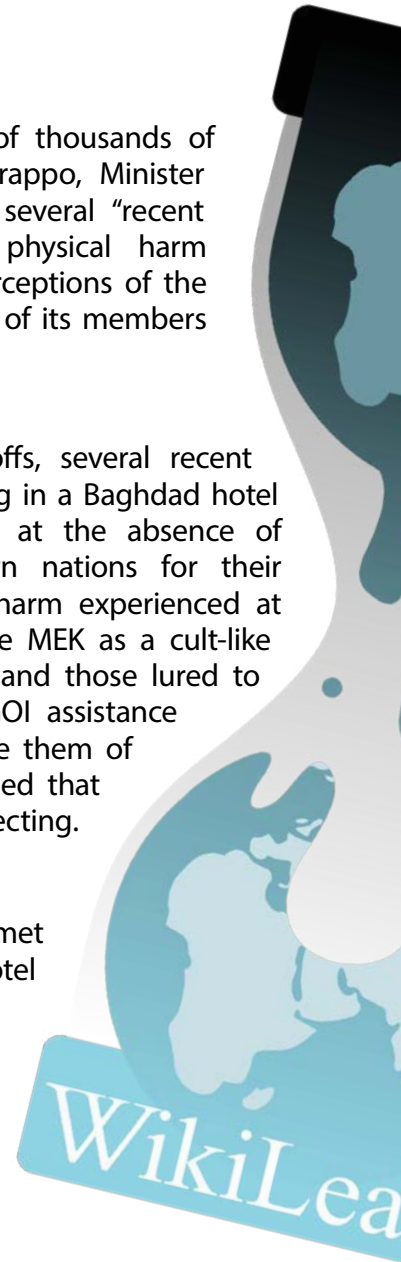
Founded by Julian Assange, WikiLeaks has leaked hundreds of thousands of classified diplomatic cables. In a cable, classified by Gary Grappo, Minister Counselor for Political Affairs at the U.S. embassy in Baghdad, several “recent defectors” from MKO in Iraq “revealed psychological and physical harm experienced at the hands of the MEK and reaffirmed existing perceptions of the MEK as a cult-like organization that thrives on maintaining control of its members and those lured to Ashraf under false pretenses.”

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Gary A. Grappo for reasons

1. (C) SUMMARY: During a September 17 meeting with Emboffs, several recent defectors from the Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MEK) organization residing in a Baghdad hotel under GOI auspices expressed frustration and disappointment at the absence of resettlement options and the alleged indifference of Western nations for their welfare as refugees. Many revealed psychological and physical harm experienced at the hands of the MEK and reaffirmed existing perceptions of the MEK as a cult-like organization that thrives on maintaining control of its members and those lured to Ashraf under false pretenses. The defectors were grateful for GOI assistance but urged greater action by the UN and third-countries to relieve them of their state of legal and physical uncertainty in Iraq. They cautioned that failure to do so would discourage other Ashraf residents from defecting.

### Frustrations Mount

2. (C) On September 17, Post’s Iran Watcher (IW) and Poloff met with MEK defectors currently housed in a modest Baghdad hotel (on GOI expense) to discuss their current situation and the circumstances that led them to Ashraf. There are 21 defectors in Baghdad, among them 20 men and one woman. (NOTE: The woman did not participate in the meeting but is willing to meet separately with Emboffs. The GOI had a representative from Ashraf committee present during the meeting. END NOTE.) Another 22 are in Erbil awaiting UNHCR resettlement. The





Baghdad defectors have been residing in a local government-run hotel (2 star equivalent) for the past several months.

3. (C) The defectors range in age between 25 and 60. On average, most have spent 10-15 years in Ashraf, either as committed MEK supporters or captives allegedly lured to Ashraf on false pretenses of employment, study abroad, or transit enroute to resettlement in Europe. The defectors confirmed that this was their first encounter with any foreign mission and welcomed future visits.

4. (C) Although appreciative of GOI assistance and support, the defectors were all unified in their desire to leave Iraq as soon as possible for resettlement/repatriation in Europe, Iran, the United States or Canada. Many accurately pointed out that their failed resettlement has offered little incentive for other residents to leave Ashraf, fearing similar hopelessness and "purgatory" in Iraqi hotels. Many also expressed disappointment with the U.S. and other Western country for refusing to accept them as refugees.

One man questioned why, after renouncing their ties with the MEK, they were still treated as terrorists and refused resettlement, pointing out that even former Guantanamo detainees were being resettled in Europe. Another man asserted that had he known resettlement would be so difficult, he would have remained in Ashraf despite its hardships.

5. (C) More than one defector expressed disappointment with and loss of trust in the USG for "encouraging us to leave and raising our expectations of assistance." Others expressed concern about the welfare of friends or relatives left behind in Ashraf. In explaining their motivations for leaving Ashraf, nearly all the defectors felt betrayed by the MEK and dismayed by their psychological and physical degradation at the hands of the organization. One man asked for help in retrieving his confiscated papers and other personal documents, including passport and Iranian identification documents, including passport and Iranian identification cards, from Ashraf.

#### Preference for Resettlement in the West

6. (C) When asked by IW about their willingness to return to Iran, only four expressed an interest while others voiced a preference "to live in freedom in an open



society, preferably in the West.” One man said that life in present-day Iran would be too alien for him given the social and political changes following the Iranian revolution. One of the four individuals destined for Iran complained about the ICRC’s lack of responsiveness in expediting their return to Iran.

7. (C) In a separate meeting later in the day, ICRC informed IW that four individuals are expected to return to Iran in a week, pending issuance of their Iranian passports and other documentation. (NOTE: The Iranian embassy in Iraq has offered to issue passports for former MEK rank and file willing to return to Iran. However, one of the defectors who claimed to be the former head of the MEK’s political department told IW that IRIG intelligence officers visit the defectors regularly to solicit their cooperation against the MEK in return for passports and possible resettlement in Europe. The defector explained that collaborators would travel to Turkey on official Iranian passports and then smuggled into Europe on falsified documents. He also dismissed claims by other defectors that they had been lured or trapped in Ashraf under false pretenses, asserting that such claims were only intended to help their resettlement cases. END NOTE.)

#### Disillusionment with the MEK

8. (C) Many of the defectors alleged psychological and physical harm at the hands of the MEK, including solitary confinement in MEK jails in Ashraf. One man in a wheelchair spoke passionately about how the MEK “crushed our personalities” and threatened to turn them over to the Saddam regime if they refused to join the organization. He and others requested medical assistance for their ailments, citing dissatisfaction with the GOI’s medical facilities.

9. (C) IW asked the defectors how long they had resided in Ashraf; their reasons for being there and what prompted their departure. Nearly all said that they had grown disillusioned with the MEK and/or life at Ashraf, and anxious to secure their freedom. Most confirmed that their departure had been facilitated by the GOI’s human rights ministry with help from the U.S. military and the Ashraf Refugee Camp (ARC) located next to Ashraf. (NOTE: ARC has since closed due to slow defection rates. END NOTE.) Below is a sampling of their answers:

--Six-year resident; 25 year-old former student; resident since 2003; lured from Iran with promises of study abroad opportunities; no ideological or political sympathies with the MEK.

--Nineteen-year resident, 39 year old former Iranian POW captured by the Iraqis; MEK



confiscated his documents and promised to facilitate his return home or resettlement abroad;

--Nine-year resident; deceived by offers of travel abroad; lured to Ashraf from Turkey with "laissez passer" documents under new name.

--Nine-year resident; former MEK recruiter in Turkey; lured to Ashraf for "consultations" with leadership but imprisoned for questionable loyalty.

--Eighteen-year resident; believed MEK was a political vice terrorist organization; escaped three months ago after several failed attempts. Brother remains in Ashraf and is unable to leave.

--Twenty-year resident; MEK member who was prevented by leadership from leaving but managed to do so with help from GOI and U.S. military.

--Twenty-year resident; self-declared freedom fighter opposed to Iran's theocracy; left MEK after "their lies were revealed"; considers MEK "the most disgusting and devious organization in the world."

--Eight-year resident; deceived with resettlement assistance while in UAE; paid MEK 13,000 USD to facilitate resettlement; found himself trapped in Ashraf.

#### Comment

10. (C) The defectors, although residing in relative comfort, are clearly (and understandably) frustrated with their situation and the lack of closure regarding possible resettlement opportunities. During a subsequent briefing to EU missions and UN reps (UNHCR, UNAMI), IW reiterated the defectors' request for resettlement assistance. UNHCR is equally frustrated at the lack of third-country interest in offering resettlement to those MEK defectors identified as refugees. EU officials, when pressed about their lack of interest, cite domestic legal restrictions against resettlement of former members of a FTO (although the EU has de-listed the MEK as a FTO, many individual EU member-states have separate legal and policy restrictions prohibiting resettlement of former FTO members.) According to UNHCR, some EU states are looking to the U.S. to initiate the resettlement process. SRSG Melkert also believes admissions of some MEK refugees will be necessary in order to prod reluctant EU member states.



## The Mujahedin-E-Khalq: An Open Source Review

The Federal Bureau of Investigation published a synopsis of the background, evolution, structure, and ideology of the MKO which, as it mentions, “incorporates information taken only from public source documents and is not provided as a detailed analytical profile of the organization.” “The data used within the study has been taken from scholarly books, various newspaper and magazine articles, MEK literature, and other available sources.”

“Founded in 1963 by disaffected young members of the Liberation Movement of Iran, the MEK began terrorist operations within Iran in mid-1971 with efforts to disrupt the Shah’s celebration of the 2500 year anniversary of the Persian monarchy,” reads the report.

The report presents the background and history of the MKO in three phases: MKO before the 1979 Iranian Revolution, MKO during the 1979 Iranian Revolution, and MKO from 1979 until the time of the publication of the report.

Before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, “the young militants (led by nine Tehran University graduates) formed a secret discussion group that eventually became a separate organization called the Sazeman-e Mujahedin-e Khalq-e Iran (The Organization of Crusaders of the Iranian People). Its three basic tenets were:

Islam is a dynamic and revolutionary religion that can be interpreted through Marxist dialectics.

Armed struggle is the only effective tactic in the struggle against imperialism.

Other Iranian opposition movements have failed because they have lacked an effective Marxist structure.”

The report goes on to say that the starting point of the MKO’s “violent activities within Iran,” was mid-1971 with the disruption of the “Shah’s celebration of the 2500 year anniversary of the Persian monarchy” which faced a failure and a captured member of the group gave information “which led to the arrest of about seventy of his



comrades.” “According to a former SAVAK official, a SAVAK penetration of the group about the same time led to the arrest, imprisonment, death, and execution of many other members, including all the MEK’s founding members. “A brother of one of the founding members then took over the group. It was during this period that Massaud Rajavi (the current leader of the group) became influential.”

“By late 1973, MEK leaders had developed a deeper interest in Marxist theory and were reading extensively in Asian and Latin American revolutionary writings and also early Soviet publications. In mid-1974 the group began sending agitators to Iranian shops and factories. Some of the group’s leaders then began to talk openly of the necessity of incorporating Marxist theory into MEK ideology.”

According to the report, MKO resumed its bombings and assassinations in 1972 against “U.S. military advisors stationed in Iran.” “For example, the MEK claimed responsibility for the assassination of U.S. Air Force Brigadier General Harold Price in 1972, the assassination of U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Hawkins in 1973, the assassination of U.S. Air Force Colonel Paul Schaeffer in 1975, and the assassination of U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Jack Turner, also in 1975.”

“The MEK also targeted U.S. civilians associated with defense projects (five killed in 1976), and numerous Iranian security officials. The group also claimed responsibility for the bombings of air and oil company offices in Iran. These attacks were well executed and were designed to attract increased attention to the anti-Shah opposition, frighten U.S. residents, and make SAVAK appear vulnerable.”

Referring to Masoud Rajavi’s leadership of the group started in 1975, the report reads, “Under his reign, the group continued its full commitment to armed struggle. One prominent journalist who was in Iran at that time, wrote that ‘MEK publications have openly boasted of the assassinations of five U.S. servicemen in Iran during its campaign of destabilization [of the Shah’s regime]. Rajavi is believed to have ordered those assassinations himself.’”

Regarding the status of the MKO during the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the report adds that the group found it “politically wise” to latch on to the enormously popular Shia movement headed by Ayatollah Khomeini. So, the group engaged in murder, arson, and acts of general sabotage which contributed to the weakening of the Iranian political system’s capability to resist the opposition.



The report highlights the influential role of the MKO in the Hostage Crisis, saying MKO was “intimately involved in the takeover of the American Embassy in Tehran in 1979.” “Eyewitnesses and MEK documents indicate that the MEK led the assault on the Embassy and then pleaded with Khomeini not to engage in dialogue with the United States Government, nor release the American hostages seized during the action. In fact, congressional testimony indicates that Rajavi insisted to Khomeini that there was much more to gain by holding the hostages than by releasing them.”

The MKO’s history from 1979 up to the time of the publication of the report starts with the group’s deprivation of a share in the new government. As a result, in June, 1981, in a “devastating miscalculation,” Rajavi ordered his followers into open combat in the streets of Tehran. But they were not successful in the battle against Iranian forces which made Rajavi and his entourage flee Iran for Paris, France.

“MEK military actions in 1981 increased dramatically and grew more violent.” “For example, in August the MEK bombed the offices of the Prime Minister, killing both President Rajaei and Premier Bahonar.”

Referring to the disagreement between Rajavi and Banisadr in the spring of 1984 and the dissolution of the NCR, the report adds that Rajavi “has continued to refer to the MEK as the NCR when representing the group during fund-raising and recruitment activities.”

The report further points to the MKO’s fund-raising activities in Europe and the US and its military activities against Iran. Meanwhile the French Government insisted that Rajavi and his entourage leave France. Therefore, Rajavi left France and the MKO was relocated in Iraq by the end of 1986. “By 1987, MEK had established base camps on the Iran-Iraq border, conducted massive military exercises (involving up to 10,000 troops), and was conducting overnight cross border attacks on Iranian targets.”

The MKO was improved in publishing, recruitment, and fund-raising capabilities had improved dramatically by 1987. Its support cells (representing themselves as the PMOI, Mujahedin, NCR, MISS, and IRF) had been established in virtually every nation in Western Europe, Canada, and the United States.

Primarily targeting idealistic young Iranian students, these MEK support cells had raised by 1987, millions of dollars, had successfully orchestrated major demonstra-



tions in cities throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and the Middle East and had obtained large amounts of weapons, ammunition, spare parts, and other military supplies from various sympathetic Governments (primarily Iraq), and had gained the support of many prominent politicians--including over 2,000 American national and local level legislators.

The second part of the 1987 FBI report on the MKO deals with the group's status at the time of publication of the report.

"During 1987, MEK leaders have publicly claimed credit for many military incursions into Iran. Asserting that the organization's military force, the Iranian National Liberation Army (INLA), consists of 10,000 soldiers; group leaders have frequently published news bulletins which highlight recent clashes with Iranian troops. For example, a recent issue of Iran Liberation informs readers that the INLA has caused the death of more than 3,000 Iranian troops since January."

The MKO's military force targeted Iranian military convoys, communication installations, and lightly defended border communities. The tactics employed by the group predominately entail nighttime raids over the border in small units, shooting or capturing Iranian sentries, holding the targeted area until early morning, and finally blowing-up the target before returning to Iraq.

The report then describes MKO's reporting of the circumstances surrounding the raid as "very likely exaggerated."

The report then deals with the US political and diplomatic endeavors that the group represents itself as the NCR of Iran outside the United States and Canada and PMOI within the United States and Canada.

The synopsis moves on to describe MKO's funding and recruitment. It says the MKO raises funds and recruits members as the IRF and the MISS. "Since at least 1984, MEK members have been going door to door soliciting 'charitable' contributions on behalf of the IRF in the Washington D.C. area and in twelve states elsewhere around the country. The U.S. Department of State (USDS) in a 1987 public source report cited that the IRF, which is based on K Street, Northwest in Washington, is not only affiliated with the MEK, but is in fact a front name for the group."

It reads that the MKO's front organization was successful in its fund raising efforts.



Washington Post staff writer, Molly Sinclair, wrote in 1985 that registration papers filed by the IRF in Maryland and in Virginia disclosed that the organization collected \$97,230 from American contributors during the year that ended in September, 1984.

“MEK members representing themselves as the MISS are also involved in fund raising activities, however, these efforts appear to be limited to college and university students around the world. The group solicits donations from sympathetic students--Iranian and others. The MISS may also be involved in recruiting activities for the MEK. While the USDA publicly regard the MISS as a front name for the MEK, it appears that the MISS may provide a communication link between MEK headquarters in Baghdad and Iranian students who are scattered throughout the world. MISS chapters located in colleges and universities throughout the United States, appear to be primarily involved in distributing MEK literature and conducting seminars.”

The MKO, according to the report, engages in propaganda against Iranian government by publishing and distributing a six-page newsletter which contains many “unsubstantiated” human rights violations in Iran.

The FBI synopsis then looks at the MKO's ideology, saying the founding members of the group believed that Shi'ism provided the revolutionary theistic basis which would attract idealistic, yet religious Iranians and that they chose Marxism as “political framework” in which they could achieve their goals.

The 1987 FBI report on the group divides MKO's central ideological principles in two layers. “The first entails the total opposition to ‘U.S. imperialism,’ which is the principal enemy of revolutionaries. To the group, all the events which occur within Iran involve this confrontation. The second is that political, social, and economic power must be used in the service of ideology. To the group, if ‘practical considerations’ take precedence over ideology, progress cannot be made toward the ideal Islamic society.”

“In their analysis of 20th century Iran, MEK theorists argue that the 1905 revolution transformed Iran from a feudal society into a bourgeois system heavily dependent upon Western capitalism and under the domination of imperialism--especially U.S. imperialism. They believe that by the late 1960s, cultural, economic, political, and military imperialism threatened the very existence of Iran. The MEK says that the Pahlavi reign had little support outside the Westernized middle and upper class



and it ruled by terror and propaganda. MEK texts call for 'heroic acts of violence' to awaken the people and begin the breakup of oppressive societies."

The following text is taken from a speech given by MEK leader Massaud Rajavi in 1972 during his trial proceedings. According to Suroosh Irfani, the text of this speech was widely circulated among MEK members and sympathizers during the period before the 1979 revolution. The statement reads:

'This trial will end tonight or tomorrow night. So perhaps these are the last nights of our lives. If we are not executed, we will be sentenced to life imprisonment. The regime is holding this trial because the people's movement has intensified and international concern for the state of political prisoners in Iran has increased. For example, Jean Paul Sartre has requested for permission to attend this trial. Al-Fateh issued a special bulletin in our support, and radio Iraq has read out the names of a number of the Shah's political prisoners threatened with execution. The Pahlavi regime, therefore, decided it was in its own interest to hold this trial.

'Each of us has been allocated only half an hour for his defense. Since this does not give us sufficient time to present our case in our ideological context, my comrades will continue the text of this defense in the context of political and economic realities and the rationale and history of our organization and revolutionary struggle.

'The cause for our misfortune and the suffering of all the people at this stage in history is international imperialism. Puppet regimes have been installed here and there by imperialism. Were these regimes to rely on themselves and their people, they would not last even for a day. There are two fronts in the world today. On the





one side are the impoverished, the deprived and exploited masses, the homeless and the hungry, the struggling Palestinians and revolutionaries. On the other side are the affluent, the greedy owners of oil wells, big industries and war machines. There is no question of a compromise or a human relationship between those two fronts. We are proud of what you call are our crimes. We feel honored that we are fighting, hand in hand with other revolutionaries, for destroying imperialism and Zionism. Only two options face us today. Either struggle or surrender. Either we must fight like the Vietnamese, Chinese, and Palestinians, or we must submit ourselves to bondage, like the (Shah's) Iran. The odds we are facing in our struggle are heavy. But a human being cannot be cleansed without suffering and trial. When I speak these words, I have in mind the mothers and fathers whose children are in prison. But such is the philosophy of life. Their children will be destroyed physically, but dawn is near. We must endure.

'I and my friends are children of Dr. Mossadeq and followers of his path for national independence and freedom. We have turned our backs on money and position. It was the people who brought Dr. Mossadeq to power to work for nationalization of oil. His was the only legal government our country has had. But Mossadeq was overthrown and the political opponents of the (Shah's) regime were massacred. Following this, the regime flung open the doors for the unrestrained plunder of Iran's wealth. Oil revenues began to be mainly used for purchasing arms and paying the salaries of American advisers.

'Today, the regime has found itself compelled to don a new dress in order to prolong its survival. It is carrying out land reforms and sharing profits with factory workers. But it is playing imperialism's game. Since the coup, (against Mossadeq in 1953) corruption in government administration and bribery are on the increase as are the misfortunes and deprivations imposed on the people by the ruling classes. Take a look at the shanty towns around Tehran. If the poor fall sick, they are condemned to die while waiting unattended outside the hospitals. The shanty town dwellers have nothing to lose except their debts. In rural areas, exploitation by landlords has been replaced by exploitation by the government. These are some of the things creating readiness for revolution. Under conditions when all voices of protest are being muffled and people are suppressed, the only way for struggle is armed resistance by the people.



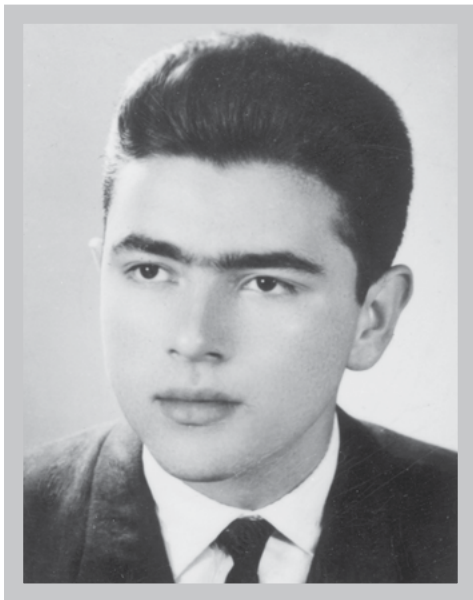
'To serve government propaganda, the regime's Prosecutor is accusing us of wasting the country's foreign exchange in purchasing arms. I wish to ask: are we the one's who have transferred huge amounts of foreign exchange from this country and sold the nation, or you? Who is hoarding foreign exchange in Swiss accounts? Who owns the hotels, night clubs, and casinos? If he (the Shah) has not acquired all these by robbing the nation of its wealth, then we must assume that his father was a thief. Are we the one's who are wasting the country's foreign exchange or those who import luxury goods and cosmetics, dresses from Dior and flowers from the Hague, whose expenditure for a night of revelry is astronomical.

'Our oil resources are being heartlessly plundered. If the present trend is to continue, Iran's oil reserves would be depleted by 1987. The present oil production stands at 227 million tons a year. Iran is receiving only \$1.3 for every \$10 of oil that is taken away and sold at high prices in European markets. We are losing at least two billion dollars in this unequal transaction. Mr. Prosecutor, take a look at this amount, and not at the foreign exchange we have used for purchasing a few machine guns. Hundreds of millions of dollars are ending up in the pockets of foreign companies. In a Press statement, the chairman of the planning commission has confessed that an amount running into hundreds of millions had been embezzled under various pretexts. We were promised that with the oil income, Iran would become a welfare state. But the masses have become more impoverished. People are denied their legal rights. When the workers of brick and smelting factories went on strike, soldiers opened fire on them. 200 workers were killed. Troops killed Dr. Khan Ali during the teachers' strike, and wounded so many others. The teachers and the factory workers had merely asked for a salary increase. Yet they were fired at, and their killers got promotions. When the regime reacts to the legitimate demands of the people in this manner, is it possible to remain silent and not pick up a gun?

'Our country is suppressed under the tips of bayonets. To resist this general suppression, even the clergy, which had withdrawn for the past 50 years, is entering the scene of struggle against the Pahlavi regime. There was an uprising in Qom. Students of religious schools attacked soldiers and soldiers killed two persons.

'This led to an uprising by the clergy, the bazaar merchants, and students. The result was the massacre in June 1963. It was after this massacre that Hanifnejad and Badizadegan came to the conclusion that it was not possible to secure one's rights





through discussion and logical arguments. They referred to the Quran and the Nahjul Balagha to begin a new revolutionary movement. Besides the Mujahideen -E- Khalq, other revolutionary groups have emerged and continue to emerge to fight for the defense of human dignity.

'That so many revolutionaries are joining the underground resistance shows that the existing conditions are such that hundreds of our best youth have stepped on the path of armed struggle. This proves that our struggle is not waged for any personal motive or objective. Hundreds of highly qualified doctors and engineers are on this path. Ten years ago, the activity of opposition groups was limited to the clandestine distribution of newsletters and bulletins. But now we are picking up arms. This is

only the beginning of our struggle. We are aware that victory cannot be achieved quickly and easily. Hazrat Ali has said: 'God does not

destroy the exploiters and oppressors of the times Himself. He gives them the opportunity to return to the straight path. When they do not do so, they sink deeper into the swamps of exploitation and decadence. Then He delegates to the people the responsibility to carry out Divine Justice. God does not heal the fractured bones of any nation without suffering and trial.'

'The (Pahlavi) regime is endeavoring to lead our youth astray by propagating the moral decadence of Western capitalism. Instead of creating conditions for heightening the social and political consciousness of the young, the regime is encouraging corruption and immorality by setting up 'Youth Palaces' (and such filthy publications as Zan-e-Rooz (Woman Today). The regime's objective is to prevent the young from getting involved with the real problems concerning them and their society.

'Ruthless suppression is being openly practiced in order to crush the spirit of resistance and instill an attitude of despair and powerlessness among



people. Armed guards are being installed in universities. SAVAK's budget is running into hundreds of millions. No one can be taken into employment without first undergoing a screening by SAVAK. The Police and SAVAK have been given unlimited authority for dealing with political dissidents. The director of Qazel Qile prison has instructed his personnel to deal with political dissidents as a butcher deals with the lamb. The regime is not prepared to tolerate opposition or criticism in any form. The workers of Jahan textile industry who were demanding a pay rise were attacked by soldiers. 12 of the factory workers were killed. A few months ago, soldiers attacked Tehran University and Arya Mehr University. Even the professors were mistreated and assaulted.

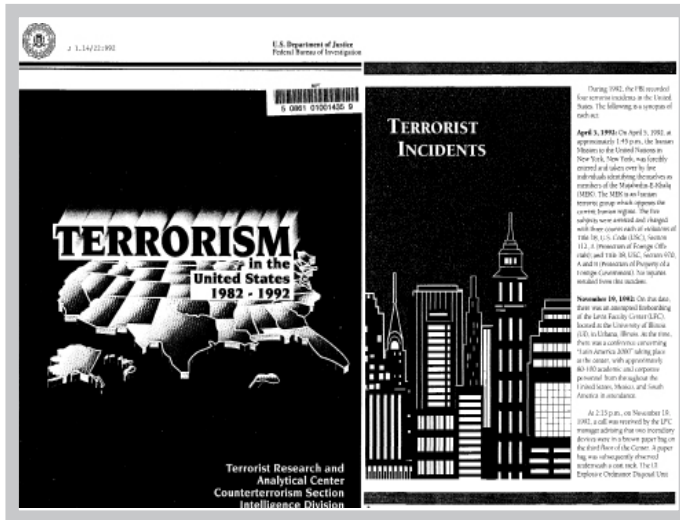
'There is nothing the regime can do but intensify its oppression. This is a clear indication of its weakness and is a sign of its impending doom. Political prisoners are being subjected to savage torture.

'Many of them have died under torture. According to article 131 of the Constitution, if an official causes the death of a political prisoner (under interrogation and torture) he is to be dealt with as a murder. Yet the killers of political prisoners are going about freely and getting promotions. Burning the body of the prisoners with a stove, pulling out the fingernails, whipping and blows to the genitals are the methods most often used. Mohammad Hanif-negad was beaten so heavily that the bones of his hands, feet, nose, and ears were crushed. Behrooz Dehqani was killed under torture. A baton smeared with acid was thrust into the rectum of Masood Ahmadzadeh. Before he died, Ahmadzadeh had to spend two months of gruelling agony in hospital. You cannot endure listening to our words. We do not expect this inhuman regime to treat us differently.

That is why we are fighting to overthrow it. We are looking forward to that day when our people will drag the traitors to the people's court. Down with American imperialism. Hail to those who endure agonies and suffering for the sakes of revolution and freedom.'



# FBI 1992 Report Cites MKO Raid on Iranian UN Mission



**F**ederal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) lists four terrorist acts in the United States during 1992. The first "terrorist incident" occurred on April 5, 1992 by the terrorist MKO group:

April 5, 1992: On April 5, 1992, at approximately 1:45 p.m., the Iranian Mission to the United Nations in New York, New York, was forcibly entered and taken over by five individuals identifying themselves as members of the Mujahedin-E-Khalq (MEK). The

MEK is an Iranian terrorist group which opposes the current Iranian regime. The five subjects were arrested and charged with three counts each of violations of Title 18, U S Code (USC), Section 112, A (Protection of Foreign Officials), and Title 18, USC, Section 970, A and B (Protection of Property of a Foreign Government) No injuries resulted from this incident.



## FBI Found lots of Evidence from MKO's Virginia Office

This analysis is based on the FBI's investigation, which has illuminated the nature of the Iranian Resistance and uncovered extremely probative and important information regarding the relationship between the NCRI and the MEK," wrote Charles E. Frahm, head of the FBI's counterterrorism division in New York.

### MUJAHEDIN-E-KHALQ (MEK)

The FBI's investigation has revealed that the People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), the National Council of Resistance (NCR) and the National Liberation Army (NLA) are interrelated organizations that share common membership, goals and leadership. These organizations refer to themselves as the Iranian Resistance. The Iranian Resistance, referred to in the West by the Farsi name of the organization, Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK), is a world-wide organization composed of several different groups, each interconnected and working toward the same goal: the violent overthrow of the current Iranian regime. Although the various groups have a wide membership, many of the members are active in activities of the other groups. As a practical matter, the various groups are viewed by both members and supporters as interchangeable components of the Iranian Resistance.

The MEK is also identified in the West as Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO). The English translation of Mujahedin-e-Khalq is the People's Mujahedin, also called the People's Mujahedin of Iran or the PMOI. These are all names synonymous with an original body of people who fought the Shah of Iran and then his successor, the current Iranian regime. Through the leadership of MASSOUD RAJAVI, this body of fighters has evolved and expanded. This expanded organization refers to itself as the Iranian Resistance and it has three basic components: a political branch (NCR), a military branch (NLA), and an internal branch (PMOI).

The NCR, the political branch of the Iranian Resistance, is also known as the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), and is headquartered in Auvers-sur-Oise, France. On its official website and in its magazine, the Lion and Sun, the NCRI refers to itself as the NCR or the NCRI interchangeably. It has representatives and representative office in North American and many Western European countries. All NCRI represen-



tatives receive immediate direction from the NCRI president and the person selected by the NCRI to be Iran's president-in-exile. The NCRI committees conduct the majority of their daily business at the location of the NCRI headquarters. The NCRI office space at the National Press Building is listed in the National Press Building property management files as a satellite office of the PMOI's office space. (TAB 1)

The NLA is the military branch of the Iranian Resistance. The NLA is a standing, conventional army and is headquartered in Baghdad, Iraq. The NLA maintains several former Iraqi military bases along the Iran-Iraq border. All NLA members, including the NLA leaders, are also PMOI members. The NLA is a designated alias of MEK and its alias designation has not been challenged.

The internal branch of the Iranian Resistance consists of the body of fighters inside Iran, now referred to within the Resistance as the Mujahedin Headquarters, People's Mujahedin, or simply the Mujahedin. These are slightly modified versions of its formal organizational name, the PMOI. The Resistance website, [www.iran-eazad.org/english/](http://www.iran-eazad.org/english/) indicates that the PMOI is the biggest NCRI member organization. The Resistance website indicates that in 1994, the NCRI decided to create offices in different countries, so the PMOI dissolved its various chapters, except for the press offices. (TAB 2) This information indicates that the MOI allows the NCRI to represent its interests abroad. Despite the various interactions of the name, it is important to understand that each one represents the same organization.

There is a great deal of evidence that illustrate the links and overlapping identities between the various organizations that comprise the Iranian Resistance.

The overall leader of the Iranian Resistance is MASSOUD RAJAVI. He formed and/or leads all three branches of the Iranian Resistance. He is the current President of the NCRI and Commander-in-Chief of the NLA. (TAB 3a) His wife is MARYAM RAJAVI, who in 1993, was selected by the NCRI to be named Iran's President-in-Exile. She is a former Secretary General of the PMOI and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the NLA, a position she did not resign until her subsequent election as President-in-Exile. From inside and outside the organization, the RAJAVIs are both considered the leaders of the Iranian Resistance. Their pictures adorn various PMOI, NCRI, NLA publications and, according to source reporting, appear at Iranian Resistance rallies and demonstrations. (TAB 3b)

A person who formerly had a position of leadership within the PMOI assumed a similar

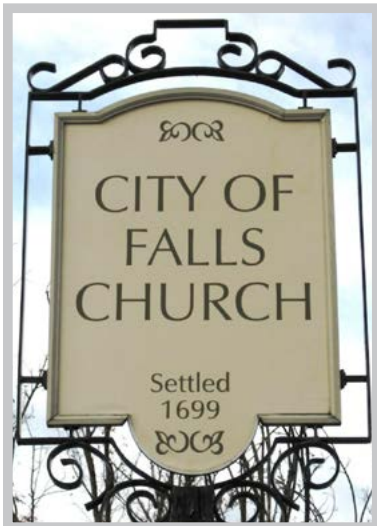


position within the NCRI. Thus, according to Foreign Agent Registration Act documents and INS forms, a current NCRI Representative to the United States, ALIREZA JAFAR-ADEH, was also a former PMOI Representative to the United States (TAB 4)

Both RAJAVIs currently reside with the NLA outside of Baghdad, Iraq. MARYAM RAJAVI, in a 1996 interview in the NCRI's LION and Sun, stated that "When the National Liberation Army makes its move toward Tehran, all our forces in the army and elsewhere, will act, and this will assist the NLA in its task and there will be a final settling of accounts between us and the regime..." (TAB 5)

#### EVIDENCE FROM FALLS CHURCH

The Iranian Resistance utilizes a residence in Falls Church, Virginia (hereinafter "Falls Church address") for its NCRI and PMOI offices spaces and operations. The Falls Church address was a house converted to use as an office space. In fact, the indoor swimming pool had been drained and a floor placed over the drained pool. The area above the pool was divided into offices. In one of these offices, a hatch in the floor led into the drained swimming pool. This area was used for storage of materials, including flags, t-shirts, magazines and other PMOI, NCRI and NLA paraphernalia. The materials were all commingled together, and not separated. In December 2001, the FBI executed a search warrant on the Falls Church address and obtained a large amount of evidence, which establishes the overlap of the PMOI, NCRI and NLA.



The FBI found evidence that indicated an overall structure of the Iranian Resistance. A copy of a schematic breakdown was found with the heading of "Iranian Resistance." It was broken down into three branches: Internal-Mujahedin Headquarters; Military – National Liberation Army; Political – National Council of Resistance. (Tab 6)

The FBI found an Account Reopen Request from Citibank among the NCRI's papers. This document indicates that a PMOI representative and a NCRI representative jointly re-opened a closed PMOI account. Signer one is SHAHIN GHOBADI, a representative of the PMOI. Signer two is ALIREZA JAFARZADEH, a NCRI representative. The P.O. Box listed on the form is a PMOI post office box. The listed home telephone number is identified as an NCRI



number on a NCR telephone schematic found in the Falls Church address. The listed work telephone number is a number identified as a PMOI number on the PMOI's account. A money order payable to the "PMI press office's Acct. 66531578" in the amount of \$10000 and dated January 3, 2001, was also seized. It appears that the money order was used to re-open the joint account. (TAB 7)

The telephone from the NCRI's and PMOI's offices at the National Press Building appear to have been forwarded to the Falls Church address. It appears when an individual telephoned either the NCRI or the PMOI at the National Press Building, the number would be forwarded to the same telephone in the Falls Church address. The FBI seized a schematic diagram showing the forwarding of PMOI and NCRI telephones to the Falls Church address. (TAB 8)

The PMOI's official newspaper, the Mojahed Weekly, commonly referred to as The Mojahed, was prepared for distribution at the Falls Church address. The papers were delivered to the Falls Church address from abroad, then prepared and mailed out to subscribers. Copies of the newspaper, copies of NASHER Limited's (the distribution company) bank statements, returned copies of the newspaper, shipping invoices, a postal money order, and keys to The Mojahed's post office box, number 1873, were seized at the Falls Church address. Subscriptions to the newspaper were sent to the post office box and later taken to the Falls Church address. Additionally, the president of The Mojahed's distribution company received personal mail at the residence. A source, who has provided reliable information in the past, previously indicated that supporters of the PMOI subscribe to The Mojahed, overpay their subscriptions to mask donations and the excess money goes to fund the Iranian Resistance, to include the NLA. (TAB 9)

Other publications found at the Falls Church address indicate links between the NCRI, NLA and PMOI. NCRI publications, particularly the Lion & Sun, regularly show NLA activities, and the NCRI's website links to the NLA's website. PMOI publications were found at the Falls Church address that also contained details of NLA military activities, schematic, training manual, and operational maps. (TAB 10)

Amongst the NCRI and PMOI documents were pictures of NLA armored vehicles inscribed with the PMOI symbol, displaying photographs of the RAJAVIS, and flying PMOI and NCRI flags. The PMOI symbol is painted on the hatch of several armored vehicles. (TAB 11) Other symbols, including various flags associated with the PMOI and



NLA, were stored together at the Falls Church address.

A reliable source indicated that Iranian Resistance supporters will write out a series of blank checks for a specific amount and give them to Resistance representatives. The FBI found examples of these types of signed, blank checks at the Falls Church address. (TAB 12) Confidential sources have reported to the FBI that the NCRI and the PMOI use the signed, blank checks to pay their expenses and fund their activities.

Travel documents for the PMOI U.S. Representatives were found at the Falls Church address. (TAB 13)

Receipts and bank account information for the PMOI were found commingled with NCRI documents. (TAB 14)

The FBI seized a three ring binder labeled "Our Materials", which contained various documents, including press releases from the NCRI and PMOI. It was divided by four tabs: Leadership, which contained documents such as biographies of Maryam and Masoud Rajavi; PMOI, which contained documents such as biographies of Alireza Jafarzadeh and Shahin Ghobadi, and an article entitled The Mojahedin and Iraq; NLA, which contained documents such as an article entitled The National Liberation Army of Iran. A brief History and an article detailing an April 1 NLA mission; and NCR, which contained documents such as a biography of Mohammad Mohaddessin. (TAB 15)

The NCRI and PMOI both list 17 Rue des Gords as an official address. It is printed on letterhead of both the NCRI and the PMOI, as well on business cards of NCRI representatives. Most importantly, the telephone number listed on the letterhead is the same number for both the NCRI and the PMOI. (TAB 16)

In sum, the FBI's investigation revealed that in the United States and elsewhere, the PMOI and the NCRI are not in actually separate organizations. While they may hold themselves out that way to the public and some of their membership, the records and operations of these entities demonstrate that they operate as one group, along with the NLA, as part of an overall organization known as the Iranian Resistance. The leadership of the PMOI and NCRI is intermixed, and the entities operate in a day-to-day way as a single unit. Thus, the FBI's investigation has confirmed that the NCRI operates as an alias of the PMOI, despite whatever claims these entities make publicly that may fool outsiders, and even some of those inside the entities.



## FBI's Overview of MKO in 2004

In 2004, the Federal Bureau of Investigation published a detailed summary of information learned during criminal investigation of MKO, which was at the time a designated foreign terrorist organization.

The report opens with introducing a number of MKO's abbreviations such as MEK, NCRI, NLA, etc. It adds that the MKO "was designated by the United States Department of State as an FTO on October 8, 1997."

Introducing the MKO's purpose as "advocating the violent overthrow of the current Iranian government," the report adds that MKO engages in acts of terrorism "as a means of reaching that goal."

"The MEK was founded in Iran in 1963 by dissatisfied members of the Liberation Movement of Iran. At the time the organization was founded, the goal was to overthrow the monarchist rule of the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. During this struggle to overthrow the Shah of Iran the MEK publically claimed responsibility for acts of terrorism against U.S. citizens and U.S. interests."

The report then lists the past terrorist activities of MKO:

1. June 1973, the MEK claimed responsibility for the assassination of Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Hawkins a U.S. citizen assigned to defend projects in Iran.
2. May 1975, the MEK claimed responsibility for the assassinations U.S. Air Force officers Colonel Paul Schaeffer and Lieutenant Colonel Jack Turner, assigned to the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group in Tehran.
3. July 1975, MEK assassins shot and killed Hassan Hossnan, an Iranian employee of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran.
4. August 1976, MEK assassins ambushed and killed U.S. citizens William C. Cottrell, Robert R. Krongrad, and Donald G. Smith as they were driving to work in Doshen Tappeh in Southeastern Tehran. All three were employed by Rockwell International.
5. December 1978, MEK assassins shot and killed U.S. citizen Paul Grimm, a Texaco executive who served as managing director of Oil Service Company of Iran, as he was driving to work.



6. February 1979, the MEK participated in the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. This event ended after the MEK vandalized the interior of the U.S. Embassy.
7. November 1979, the MEK again participated in the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, which resulted in numerous U.S. citizens being taken hostage and held over fourteen (14) months.
8. June 1981, the MEK began large scale protests against Khomeini, and after the suffered heavy losses, the MEK, was banned from Iran.
9. August 1981, the MEK seized the Iranian Interest Section in Washington D.C. Nine (9) people were taken hostage and over \$500000 in damage was done to the facility. Twenty-four (24) MEK members were arrested in connection with the incident.
10. April 1992, the MEK carried out attacks on twelve (12) diplomatic establishments in ten (10) countries, including the Iranian Mission to the United Nations in New York City.
11. August 1992, the MEK claimed responsibility for the grenade attack on the home of the deputy of the legislature of Iran's Lorestan province.
12. November 1992, members of the MEK and pro-Iranian individuals assaulted one another at Dulles Airport, near Washington, D.C.
13. June 1993, the MEK claimed responsibility for the bombings at eight (8) oil pipeline and refinery sites in western Iran.
14. November 1994, members of the MEK attacked the car of an Iranian diplomat in Denmark.
15. April 1995, members of the MEK were involved in an assault with pro-Iranian individuals at LAX. MEK members were charged with assault, and failed to appear in court. Warrants were issued for multiple MEK members.
16. June 1998, MEK claimed responsibility for multiple bombings in Iran, which were reported to have killed at least three people and wounded several others.
17. June 1998, MEK members assaulted U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security special agents and the Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi in New York City. Four MEK member were arrested. They later failed to appear in court and federal warrants were issued.



18. August 1998, MEK assassins shot and killed Assadollah Lajavardi the former head of Evin prison, in Iran. Two innocent bystanders were also shot and killed along side Lajevardi in the attack which took place at Lajevardi's private business located in the Tehran Bazaar.

19. February 1999, MEK attempted to assassinate Mohsen Rafiqdoust, the head of Iran's largest state-affiliated economic conglomerate, Bonyade-E Mostazafan Va Janbzan.

20. April 1999, the MEK spokesman Shahin Gobadi in Paris, France claimed responsibility for the assassination of Brigadier General Ali Sayyad Shirazi, Deputy Chief of the Iranian Joint Staff Command of Armed Forces.

The 2004 FBI report on the MKO further deals with the current terrorist activities of the MKO found during wiretaps of the group members.

"Los Angeles investigation has determined that the MEK is currently actively involved in planning and executing acts of terrorism. The planning takes place at MEK bases in Iraq and at the Auver Sur Oise location in Paris, France. Los Angeles has consensually recorded numerous telephone calls in which the MEK leaders at this French location discuss specific acts of terrorism to include bombings. Joint investigation with the French DST and the German Cologne Police Department has revealed similar findings from French and German wire taps."

The review moves on to explain the fundraising methods of MKO and using accounts in several countries to launder the money.

"Additionally, investigation has determined that the MEK is very active in fund raising. In the past the most money being generated was from the Los Angeles and Washington D.C. cell of the MEK. This money is then transferred overseas through a complex international money laundering operation that uses accounts in Turkey, Germany, France, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates. MEK fund raising was stopped by the February 2001 arrests in Los Angeles, however Los Angeles investigation has revealed that the MEK as of February 2003; again is attempting to start up their Los Angeles fund raising operation."

The report adds that the MKO is made up of at least three primary branches:

1. The National Liberation Army (NLA), which is the military and operational branch of



the MEK. The NLA is headquartered in Iraq where they receive most of their military equipment and support from Saddam Hussain. The MEK conducts most or all of their terrorist training and operations with the NLA under the protective umbrella of Iraq.

2. A support network that operates in the United States and other foreign countries, this support network is organized into cells that are lead by a MEK leadership cadre that are sent to the U.S. and abroad from Iraq and France. This support network is responsible for propaganda, demonstrations, fund raising, and surveillance and intimidation of Iranian government sympathizers and agents. This network is headquartered at the Auver Sur Oise location in Paris, France. Joint investigation between Los Angeles and the Cologne Police Department revealed that the MEK cell in Cologne, Germany was obtaining large quantities of Night Vision Goggles from a sporting good store in Cologne. The funds for this were obtained through a complex social benefit fraud scheme that used children with multiple identities to claim multiple benefit checks. In Los Angeles evidence from one of the search sites revealed that money obtained in Los Angeles was used to purchase GPS systems that specifically were purchased to increase accuracy of terrorist mortar attacks in the city of Tehran. In Los Angeles the section responsible for fund raising was referred to as the ME or "Mali Ejtemaie".

3. The political branch is referred to as the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCR). This group was recently unsuccessful in challenging their designation as a foreign terrorist organization in U.S. Federal court. The NCR is very active in Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles. The NCR is primarily involved in political lobbying, propaganda, demonstrations, and legal issues associated with the MEK. This highly litigious organization has an office in Washington D.C. and commingles its headquarters to the MEK's Washington D.C. cell location in Falls Church Virginia. This organization routinely lobbies unwitting members of Congress under the pretext of human rights issues in Iran.

From investigation, it has been determined that the MEK operatives in the U.S. are highly organized and take direction directly from MASOUD and MARYAM RAJAVI, the leaders of the MEK who are based in Iraq. In the U.S., these operatives fall into the MEK's support network branch and in the NCR. In Los Angeles the support branch is the primary MEK operation and the NCR plays a minimal role. Most, if not all, of the MEK leaders are former NLA fighters who have been prompted to leadership



ranks and then are transferred to various support branches, such as the cell in Los Angeles.

The current overall leader of the MEK is MASOUD RAJAVI. His wife, MARYAM RAJAVI, is also involved in the leadership of the MEK. MEK members, supporters, and sympathizers, have a fanatical almost “cult-like” loyalty to the RAJAVI’s. In many U.S. cities, including Los Angeles, the MEK operates from a main office or base known as “kanoon”. This base is run by an MEK cell leader. In Los Angeles, the last cell leader was ROYA RAHMANI, aka SISTER TAHMINEH. She was arrested along with the 6 other leaders of the Los Angeles MEK cell in February 2001.

As explained above, the MEK is split into three branches. These branches are controlled and directed by the MEK’s supreme leader MASOUD RAJAVI. RAJAVI continued to operate the MEK out of bases in Iraq up until 2003 when the U.S. invaded Iraq. Currently Rajavi is still leading the MEK from an unknown location. RAJAVI is viewed as a “godlike” cult figurehead by the MEK and seems determined to continue his struggle for power in Iran. This struggle appears futile to the outside observer, however, is viewed with fanatical optimism by the MEK members and supporters. RAJAVI utilizes the Auver Sur Oise location for contact with the Western World and his supporting cells in various Western countries.

The National Liberation Army is run by an ever changing command structure that ultimately answers to RAJAVI. AMRYAM RAJAVI has been referred to as the MEK’s “President Elect”, however source reporting has indicted that this was done to appease liberal political movements in Europe and the U.S. and has since been diminished due to U.S. and recent European Union designation of the MEK as a terrorist organization and MARYAM Rajavi’s arrest in France in June 2003. RAJAVI uses a council known as the “SHORA” to create MEK laws and mandate MEK policy. This group used to hold their meetings in Baghdad in a facility provided by Saddam Hussein. Currently the SHORA is required to meet at the Ashraf base as this is the location that the MEK is currently being held by U.S. and Coalition forces. Source reporting indicates that this “SHORA” is a front for Western governments and that the MEK policy is set by RAJAVI exclusively.

Source reporting and open source reporting has indicted in the past that RAJAVI’s MEK was utilized by Saddam Hussein as a surrogate or auxiliary and had been used to smash rebellions among the Iraq Kurdish and Shia populations.



Investigation in Los Angeles has determined that the MEK's command and control is based on a highly centralized structure that is organized into "communist" style cells that must answer directly to their higher commands before taking on any initiative. Thus, independent initiatives from Los Angeles MEK members are slow to gain approval whereas directives from the Auvers Sur Oise or directly from Iraq are implemented immediately. An example of this was uncovered during OPERATION EASTERN MONEY when the MEK leadership was recalled to Iraq and told to close the Los Angeles "kanoon". This order was received by the MEK on a Monday and by Saturday they were packing the "kanoon" and obtaining flights to Europe when the FBI intervened with their arrests. Conversely, the MEK cell in Los Angeles proposed new fund raising methods during a conference call to the Auvers Sur Oise location in October 2000, and as of February 2001 had not yet received a response before the Los Angeles arrests.

#### MEK Travel

In the past up until the arrest in Paris, France and the U.S. Invasion of Iraq, the MEK was routinely travelling from Europe to Iraq. Leaders such as ABOULGHASSEM REZAAE, aka BROTHER HABIB and MOHAMMAD MOHADESSINE, aka BROTHER BEHNAM traveled back and forth to Iraq from the Auvers Sur Oise location at a minimum on a quarterly basis. Their travel route was typically from Charles De Gaulle International Airport to Amman, Jordan, then overland to Baghdad.

MEK members and supporters often travel under false identities and it is common for MEK supporters to be asked to provide their European or U.S. passport for use by a similar appearing MEK members.

#### Anticipated MEK Plans

Source reporting from Los Angeles has indicated that the U.S. and European designation of the MEK as a terrorist organization is foremost in the discussions of MEK leadership. Additionally the MEK is attempting to align themselves with the West by reporting information about the Iranian Nuclear Weapons program. This information has a two-fold purpose; first, it furthers the MEK's cause by disrupting the current Iranian government, and Second, it is an attempt to paint the MEK in the light of an ally to the U.S. and a potential alternate government or as they refer to a "government in exile". With this reporting the MEK is attempting to gain legitimacy



with Western governments and at the same time is attempting to disrupt the government of Iran.

During the first Gulf War in 1991, the MEK “hunkered down” in their bases and barracks and due to their geographic location were unmolested by the advancing U.S. forces. With the 1997 U.S. and the 2001 European Union designation of the MEK as a terrorist organization things are currently different. Source reporting indicated that the MEK feared that they may be targeted in a U.S. led attack on Iraq and their bases may be destroyed and their NLA fighters captured. MASOUD RAJAVI fled in anticipation of the U.S. led invasion and was not captured by U.S. or coalition forces.

It is not believed that the MEK will launch attacks against U.S. interests or European interests based solely on a U.S. led invasion of Iraq, however, the MEK may still attempt to organize terrorist operations in the U.S. and Europe targeting Iranian interests. Based on Los Angeles source penetration, any plans in this direction will be very apparent and steps can be taken to neutralize them as they are developing.

Additionally, the MEK continues to practice misinformation operations in the U.S. and Europe. MEK lobbyist routinely hold press conferences and pass information regarding the current Iranian government that is inaccurate and designed to influence Western media and governments. Another tactic that the MEK has been employing is disinformation regarding former MEK members and witnesses who have come forward to testify and speak against the MEK. The MEK will brand these former members and witnesses as Iranian government agents. This information is often picked up by Western Intelligence agencies as factual information and is disseminated as intelligence. This further frustrates criminal investigators as they attempt to interview these former MEK members and potentially use them for testimony.

Source reporting on this particular tactic and joint FBI/DST investigation has shown this to be the case of Masoud Tayebi who had reported on Saddam Hussein’s chemical weapons being stored at MEK bases. This same tactic was also used against the Cooperating Witness in OPERATION EASTERN MONEY who is currently in the Federal Witness Security program.

#### D. Los Angeles Investigation

OPERATION EASTERN APPROACH: This investigation resulted in numerous arrests and searches of a complex large scale immigration smuggling ring that smuggled



thousands of Iranian nationals into the U.S. utilizing forged and fraudulent identity documents and INS applications. It was shown that some of these Iranian nationals were MEK members. The ringleader of this smuggling ring, BAHRAM TABATABAI, was convicted in October 1999, of Title 18 USC 2339B ("providing material support to a designated terrorist organization").

This investigation is in its final phase. A handful of MEK members and supporters are still in INS custody. A number of MEK sympathizers are currently in INS deportation proceedings. Save for MOHAMMAD MOSENI, who is currently at risk of being thrown back into Federal custody, this smuggling ring associated with BAHRAM TABATABAI has been dismantled. MORTEZA AGHAVALI and SHOKUH MOUSAVINASAB are being investigated under a separated investigation.

OPERATION EASTERN MONEY: Investigation in Los Angeles uncovered a fraud scheme by the MEK in which they utilized a charity known as the COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (CHR) in order to provide a front for their fund raising for the MEK's NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY. The basis of this fraud was that the MEK members and supporters would represent themselves as a non profit group of doctors and nurses fund raising for starving Iranian refugee children. They would then send the money to bank accounts in Turkey where it would be laundered through a sophisticated money laundering ring before being sent on to Iraq to fund the MEK's terrorist operation. From these Turkish bank accounts a similar MEK front known as the COUNCIL TO MONITOR HUMAN RIGHTS (CHRI) was discovered in the Washington D.C. area. This resulted in a joint Los Angeles/WFO investigation which led to Cologne, Germany and Paris, France. The Cologne, Germany portion of this case was taken down in December 2001. The French portion was taken down in June 2003 and resulted in the arrests of 165 MEK members and supporters, 17 of whom were charged for terrorism violations.

In Los Angeles the investigation resulted in 7 arrests and 5 searches of the MEK leaders and their respective locations, including the main MEK base or "kanoon" in Los Angeles. This investigation produced a 59 count indictment of violations of Title 18 USC 2339B ("providing material support to a designated terrorist organization"). This indictment was recently dismissed because U.S. Federal Judge Takasugi found that the entire statute was unconstitutional. This decision has been in September 2003. A decision is pending.



OPERATION LION HUNTER: Since 04/26/01, Los Angeles has been investigating efforts by the MEK to re-establish a Los Angeles cell which had been dismantled as the result of a previous Los Angeles investigation. The MEK leadership, from its European base of operations in France, has tasked a Los Angeles Cooperating Witness to gather intelligence in Los Angeles for use by the MEK in planning their operations worldwide.

The Los Angeles CW has maintained contact with Paris-based ALI AKBAR HAGHIGHI, aka SEYED, aka BROTHER MOSLEM and MAHMOOD KELMOOR, aka JAMSHID, aka BROTHER REZVAN regarding the MEK's operations in Los Angeles. The CW has identified HAGHIGHI as being one of the highest ranking members of the MEK's Intelligence Unit outside of MEK headquarters in Iraq. HAGHIGHI agreed to pay the CW every month for his services. The CW has, to date, received \$19500 from the MEK which the CW has provided to the FBI as evidence.

The CW continued to consensually record the three or more weekly telephone calls with HAGHIGH and KELMOOR up until the June 2003 French take down of the MEK at the Auvers Sur Oise location. During the conversations, HAGHIGHI and KELMOOR have identified the significant intelligence gathering efforts of the MEK in Los Angeles. HAGHIGHI has also linked the MEK to the ALAMOOT SOCIETY, a radical Los Angeles based Iranian group led by HAMID SAMANI a MEK supporter.

The CW has traveled operationally to Paris for meetings with HAGHIGHI, KELMOOR and IBRAHIM ZAKERI (now deceased), the head of the MEK Intelligence Section. HAGHIGHI and KELMOOR continued to provide the CW with information regarding the MEK's future plans for gathering intelligence and fund-raising in the United States and Europe and contingencies upon the U.S. led invasion of Iraq.

This investigation had also developed information suggesting that in exchange for utilizing bases in Iraq, the MEK was tasked by Iraq to gather intelligence of interest to Iraq via MEK sources located throughout the world.

The CW had also developed valuable information regarding the activities of MOHAMMAD SEYED MOHADESIN, the MEK Secretary of State, and ABOULGHASSEM REZAEI, the head of the MEK Intelligence Section at the Auvers Sur Oise location, the MEK headquarters in France.

Primarily based on this and previous Los Angeles investigations, Los Angeles, WFO,



LEGAT Paris, FBIHQ, and the French DST initiated a joint long-term investigation of the MEK. The DST detailed the goal of their investigation as the complete dismantlement of the MEK base at the Auvers Sur Oise location near Paris. During the meeting, the DST indicated that future travel of the Los Angeles CW to Paris would be of great benefit to the DST investigation and the dismantlement of Auvers Sur Oise.

On June 17, 2003, the French DST conducted a large scale operation which resulted in numerous search warrants to include the "Auvers Sur Oise" location, 165 investigative detentions, 25 arrests, and 17 international indictments. Joint ongoing investigation is planned to resume in this case after September 2003, as the French have requested time to complete investigation and evaluate results prior to continued joint investigation.

#### Joint Investigation, Australia AFP

The FBI and the Australian AFP conducted a joint investigation of a known MEK member MOHAMMAD REZA MARSALI-MARKIEH and his associates. MARSALI-MARKIEH was found to have been involved in monetary wire transfers between himself and a Los Angeles subject ALIREZA MOHAMADMORADI. Funds were moved between the two and then on to the complex web of MEK money laundering in Europe.

Los Angeles special agents traveled to Australia in May 2003 and participated in searches at the residence of MAARSALI-MARKIEH and his associates. Evidence found at this location directly connected the Los Angeles FBI investigation to that of the Australian AFP investigation of the MEK. The MEK group in Australia was uncovered during OPERATION EASTERN MONEY when they began to appear on conference calls with the Los Angeles MEK cell during planning calls with the MEK's Auvers Sur Oise location. Recently in November 2004, MASALI-MARKIEH was denied entry to the U.S. and deported back to Australia upon his arrival in Washington D.C.

#### Planned Joint Investigation, Swedish SAPO/Police.

The Swedish SAPO and National Police have expressed an interest to LEGAT Copenhagen in conducting joint investigation of the MEK with Los Angeles. The FBI has conducted some preliminary joint and has exchanged at least one International Letter Rogatory with Sweden regarding ongoing MEK investigation.

#### Letters Rogatory and MLATS:



Currently Los Angeles is working with the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Central District of California to obtain financial records for the MEK's international money laundering operation from various countries by legal means in accordance with DOJ protocols. These include Letters of Rogatory for Sweden, Norway, Germany, Turkey, Jordan, and Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs) with France.

To date Los Angeles has received information from all of these countries and is in the process of analyzing the data received. The information from Turkey was used directly in the affidavit for the OPERATION EASTERN MONEY arrests. It is anticipated that an MLAT would be generated for Italy to request through official channels any information deemed mutually beneficial during the December 2004 planning conference with Italian Counterterrorism investigators.

### Iraq Investigation

In April 2004, an FBI team returned from Iraq. In Iraq, the FBI team traveled to Ashraf, Iraq and where they conducted over 175 interviews of MEK members and MEK defectors. FBI interviews developed a wealth of MEK members and MEK defectors. FBI interview developed a number of witnesses. One witness in particular was returned to the U.S. This witness was in a senior position within the MEK and has a wealth of information about MEK ongoing and past activities. The Witness is currently being fully debriefed and is anticipated to testify in the Los Angeles prosecution of MEK leaders and may be in a position to testify in Europe should it be requested through MLAT.

Currently, a number of U.S. citizens were found to be MEK members in Iraq. These individuals are currently pending prosecution and may be returned to the U.S. in the near future for prosecution. The FBI established a database of all known MEK members at the MEK's Ashraf base in Iraq. This database is available should it be requested through MLAT.

The report concludes with a guide containing sample questions grouped by detainee category, lessons learned from past interviews, and background material on MEK ideology that prove helpful in interviews anticipated for potential interviews of MKO members detained in Iraq.

● Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) Criminal Investigation," November 29, 2004, available from <http://www.american.com/archive/2011/FBI%20-%20REPORT.pdf>



## MKO's Alliance with Saddam Discredited the Group among Iranians

In his prepared testimony before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee in May 19, 2005, Abbas William Samii, regional analyst for Southwest Asia at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty talked, inter alia, about the MKO and concluded that “the belief that there is a pre-existing democratic movement or even an effective opposition group, however, is inaccurate.”

... One side of the opposition spectrum is represented by the Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO or MEK) which the U.S. State Department designated a “foreign terrorist organization” in 1997. Still identified as a terrorist organization, the MKO also is known as the National Liberation Army of Iran (the militant wing of the MKO), the People's Mujahedin of Iran, National Council of Resistance, the National Council of Resistance of Iran, and Muslim Iranian Student's Society (a front organization used to garner financial support). The EU designated the MKO's military wing as a terrorist organization in May 2002. The MKO was created in the 1960s and its ideology combines Islam and Marxism. It was involved with anti-U.S. terrorism in the 1970s, and it initially supported the 1978-79 revolution. In June 1981, it staged an unsuccessful uprising against the Islamic regime; many members were imprisoned while others fled the country. The MKO transitioned from being a “mass movement” in 1981 to having “all the main attributes of a cult” by mid-1987, Professor Ervand Abrahamian writes in his 1989 book, *Radical Islam: The Iranian Mojahedin*. The MKO refers to its head, Masud Rajavi, in religious terms, calling him the rahbar (leader) and imam-i hal (present imam). From its Iraqi exile the MKO attacked the Iranian regime's leadership: a 1981 bombing killed President Mohammad-Ali Rajai and Prime Minister Mohammad-Javad Bahonar, in 1992 it attacked 13 Iranian embassies, and it is behind other mortar attacks and assassination attempts in Iran. Former President Saddam Hussein granted the MKO refuge in Iraq, and it helped Saddam Hussein suppress the 1991 uprisings of Shia in southern Iraq and Kurds in the north, so it is not very popular in Iraq. The MKO fought Iranian forces in the Iran-Iraq War, and this has discredited the organization among the Iranian public.

● Abbas William Samii, “The Quest for Iran's Democratic Movement,” Testimony for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, May 19, 2005; available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-109shrg25153/html/CHRG-109shrg25153.htm>







## No Exit Human Rights Abuses Inside the MKO Camps

The logo of Human Rights Watch, featuring the words "HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters arranged in three lines on a solid blue square background.

HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
WATCH

The New York-based Human Rights Watch is an international NGO, “dedicated to protecting the human rights of people around the world”. This NGO, according to its website, “scrupulously investigate abuses, expose the facts widely, and pressure those with power to respect rights and secure justice.”

HRW published a 28-page report on 18 May 2005 entitled: “No Exit: Human Rights Abuses Inside the MKO Camps” and detailed the human rights abuses carried out by MKO leaders against dissident members ranged from prolonged incommunicado and solitary confinement to beatings, verbal and psychological abuse,

coerced confessions, threats of execution, and torture that in two cases led to death.

### I. Summary

The Mojahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) is an armed Iranian opposition group that was formed in 1965. An urban guerrilla group fighting against the government of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, it was an active participant in the anti-monarchy struggle that resulted in the 1979 Iranian revolution.

After the revolution, the MKO expanded its organizational infrastructure and recruited many new members. However it was excluded from participating in power sharing arrangements, and the new revolutionary government under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini forced it underground after it instigated an armed uprising against



the government in June 1981. The majority of its top cadres went into exile in France. In France, the MKO continued its active opposition to Iran's government. In 1986, under pressure from the French authorities, the MKO relocated to Iraq. There it established a number of military camps under the banner of the National Liberation Army and maintained an armed presence inside Iraq until the fall of Saddam Hussein's government in 2003.

During the Iran-Iraq war, the MKO fighters made regular incursions into Iranian territory and fought against Iranian government forces. After the end of Iran-Iraq war, the group's armed activities decreased substantially as Saddam Hussein's government curtailed the MKO's ability to launch attacks inside Iranian territory.

The fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003 put an end to Iraqi financial and logistical support of the MKO. The MKO fighters remained neutral during the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. After the occupation of Iraq, the U.S. military disarmed the MKO fighters and confined them inside their main camp known as Camp Ashraf. U.S. military sources told Human Rights Watch that as of March 10, 2005, there were 3,534 MKO members inside Camp Ashraf.

Some MKO fighters took advantage of an amnesty offer by the Iranian government. Since October 2004, 273 MKO members have returned to Iran. The U.S. military has recognized the MKO fighters in Iraq as Protected Persons under the Geneva Conventions. Their fate remains uncertain; the Iraqi government and the U.S. military appear not to have reached a decision regarding their future.

During Saddam Hussein's last year in power, some Iranians held in Abu Ghraib prison were repatriated to Iran in exchange for Iraqi prisoners of war (POWs). These were dissident members of the MKO who had been sent by the organization for "safekeeping" in Abu Ghraib. The release of these prisoners in 2002-2003 provided a direct window into conditions inside the MKO camps that was previously inaccessible to the outside world.

Human Rights Watch interviewed five of these former MKO members who were held in Abu Ghraib prison. Their testimonies, together with testimonies collected from seven other former MKO members, paint a grim picture of how the organization treated its members, particularly those who held dissenting opinions or expressed an intent to leave the organization.

The former MKO members reported abuses ranging from detention and persecution of ordinary members wishing to leave the organization, to lengthy solitary



confinements, severe beatings, and torture of dissident members. The MKO held political dissidents in its internal prisons during the 1990s and later turned over many of them to Iraqi authorities, who held them in Abu Ghraib. In one case, Mohammad Hussein Sobhani was held in solitary confinement for eight-and-a-half years inside the MKO camps, from September 1992 to January 2001.

The witnesses reported two cases of deaths under interrogation. Three dissident members—Abbas Sadeghinejad, Ali Ghashghavi, and Alireza Mir Asgari—witnessed the death of a fellow dissident, Parviz Ahmadi, inside their prison cell in Camp Ashraf.

Abbas Sadeghinejad told Human Rights Watch that he also witnessed the death of another prisoner, Ghorbanali Torabi, after Torabi was returned from an interrogation session to a prison cell that he shared with Sadeghinejad.

The MKO's leadership consists of the husband and wife team of Masoud and Maryam Rajavi. Their marriage in 1985 was hailed by the organization as the beginning of a permanent "ideological revolution." Various phases of this "revolution" include: divorce by decree of married couples, regular writings of self-criticism reports, renunciation of sexuality, and absolute mental and physical dedication to the leadership.

The level of devotion expected of members was in stark display in 2003 when the French police arrested Maryam Rajavi in Paris. In protest, ten MKO members and sympathizers set themselves on fire in various European cities; two of them subsequently died. Former members cite the implementation of the "ideological revolution" as a major source of the psychological and physical abuses committed against the group's members.

At present, the MKO is listed as a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department and several European governments. The MKO's leadership is engaged in an extensive campaign aimed at winning support from Western politicians in order to have the designation of a terrorist organization removed.<sup>10</sup>

### Methodology

Human Rights Watch interviewed by telephone twelve former members of the MKO living in Europe. These witnesses provided credible claims that they were subjected to imprisonment as well as physical and psychological abuses because they had either expressed criticism of the MKO's policies or had requested to leave the organization's military camps.

Each witness was interviewed separately several times between February and May



2005. All witnesses are currently living in Europe. More than twelve hours of testimonies were collected. All interviews were conducted in Farsi. Each witness provided independent accounts of their experience inside the MKO camps, and their testimonies corroborated other evidence collected by Human Rights Watch. A number of witnesses who were detained and tortured inside the MKO camps named Hassan Ezati as one of their interrogators. Hassan Ezati's son, Yasser Ezati, also interviewed for this report, confirmed his father's identity as a MKO interrogator.

Of the twelve former MKO members interviewed for this report, eight witnesses left Iraq between 2002 and 2004. The remaining four witnesses left Iraq in the aftermath of the first Gulf War in 1991. In addition to being held in internal MKO prisons, five of the witnesses were imprisoned in Abu Ghraib prison prior to their release.

## II. Background

The MKO was founded in September 1965 by three graduates of Tehran University: Mohammad Hanifnezhad, Saeed Mohsen and Asghar Badizadegan. The three shared a history of political activism within the religious-nationalist movement and its affiliated Islamic Students Associations. They believed that opposition forces against the Pahlavi government lacked a cohesive ideology and required revolutionary leadership. They reasoned that peaceful resistance against the government was fruitless, and that only a revolutionary armed struggle could dislodge the monarchy.

The organization's founding trio focused their initial thrust on creating a revolutionary ideology based on their interpretation of Islam that could fuel an armed struggle by persuading masses of people to rise up against the government. This ideology relied heavily on an interpretation of Islam as a revolutionary message compatible with modern revolutionary ideologies, particularly Marxism.

Initially, the founding members recruited some twenty like-minded friends to form a discussion group. Their first meeting, on September 6, 1965, in Tehran, is considered the genesis of the MKO. The group's discussions centered on intense study of religion, history and revolutionary theory. In addition to religious texts, the group also studied Marxist theory at length. For its first three years, the group held regular secret meetings. By 1968, these discussions led to the creation of a Central Committee "to work out a revolutionary strategy" and an Ideological Team "to provide the group with its own theoretical handbooks."

During its first five years, the MKO did not carry out any operations against the government. It primarily focused on developing a revolutionary ideology and training its



members in urban guerilla warfare. In 1970, thirteen MKO members traveled to Jordan and Lebanon and received military training inside Palestinian Liberation Organization camps. They returned to Iran after a few months.

Prior to carrying out any armed activities, the group planned to focus on developing its ideology and training its new recruits. However, this strategy was thwarted by the emergence of a competing Marxist guerilla group, the Fadaian Khalq Organization. On February 8, 1971, members of the Fadaian launched their first operation by attacking a police station in the village of Siahkal in the northern province of Gilan. This incident marked the emergence of armed struggle against the shah's government.

The MKO's leadership, surprised by the Siahkal incident, decided to expedite their plans for armed operations by organizing a spectacular attack in Tehran. At this time, the government was in the midst of promoting a large-scale celebration marking 2500 years of monarchy in Iran. The MKO planned a series of bombings that would target Tehran's electric power grids prior to the opening eve ceremonies.

During their efforts to acquire explosives, the MKO were infiltrated by the security forces who tracked their activities. On August 23, 1971, just days before the scheduled onset of their first operation, thirty-five members of the MKO were arrested by the authorities. Within the next few months, half of MKO's member were arrested and put on trial by a military tribunal. "They were all accused of possessing arms, planning to overthrow the 'constitutional monarchy,' and studying such subversive authors as Marx, Mao, and Che Guevara."

The three founding members of the MKO, along with six others from the group's Central Committee, were sentenced to death and executed on May 25, 1972. Only two members of the Central Committee, Masoud Rajavi and Bahman Bazargani, escaped firing squads when their death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment.

The 1971-72 waves of arrests, executions and imprisonments dealt a severe blow to the MKO, but its remaining members who escaped detection by the security forces continued to recruit new members as well as carrying out a number of armed operations. In 1975, intense ideological differences among the MKO members led to the departure of a sizable number of members, who argued that religious thought was incompatible with revolutionary struggle. This offshoot of the MKO was briefly known as the Marxist Mojahedin and was later renamed Peykar Organization. The MKO members who stayed loyal to the group's original ideology referred to this event as an internal coup.



On the eve of the 1979 Iranian revolution, the imprisoned MKO members were released along with other political prisoners. The group quickly turned its attention to building a nation-wide organization. Masoud Rajavi emerged as the top MKO leader. The group was particularly successful in gaining the sympathies of middle class educated youth. It established offices throughout Iran and built a network of militia that were highly active inside university campuses and high schools.

While supporting the leadership of Khomeini in the immediate aftermath of the revolution, the MKO leaders never managed to gain his trust, and as a result were excluded from power-sharing arrangements in the post-revolutionary government. An intense rivalry developed between the MKO and the Islamic Republican Party (IRP), formed by Khomeini's disciples.

The first president of the republic, Abol-Hasan Banisadr, elected in 1980, also faced serious opposition from the IRP. In the first months of 1981, differences among competing political factions reached a critical juncture. President Banisadr came under intense political pressure from the IRP, which controlled the parliament and most branches of the government and security forces. The MKO and Banisadr formed an alliance to try and thwart the IRP's drive to consolidate its control over every part of the state.

In the aftermath of the June 20 uprising, the MKO was forced underground and both Banisadr and Rajavi went into hiding. A few weeks later, on July 29, 1981, Banisadr and Rajavi fled Iran and went into exile in Paris. From this point on, the MKO moved its headquarters to Paris and continued to fight the Iranian government by carrying out assassinations and bombings targeting government officials and the IRP leadership.

In Paris, Rajavi and Banisadr consolidated their alliance by declaring the establishment of the National Council of Resistance (NCR) as a coalition of opposition forces, advertising itself as "the democratic alternative" to Iran's government. The Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) and a number of prominent intellectuals and individuals also joined the NCR.

However, the NCR's role as a broad coalition was diminished within a year of its founding. Banisadr's disagreements with Rajavi led to his departure in April 1984. The KDPI followed suit and withdrew in 1985. According to Masoud Banisadr, who served as the NCR's chief representative in Europe and the United States until 1996, the NCR has since functioned primarily as the political wing of the MKO, serving the MKO's lobbying efforts in Europe and North America:

It was obvious to everyone but ourselves that politically the Mojahedin had failed to



create the broad coalition Rajavi had promised....We repeated to each other that the NCR was Rajavi's means of staying on the political scene in Europe and America and nothing more. Its main use was to deceive the Americans and Europeans against thinking of us as the same Mojahedin responsible for assassinating American citizens in Iran...

The MKO's leadership was transformed when Masoud Rajavi announced his marriage to Maryam Uzdhanlu on March 18, 1985. The husband and wife team became co-leaders of the MKO. The organization hailed their marriage as an "ideological revolution" that was the result of an immense sacrifice made by Masoud and Maryam Rajavi. Prior to this, Maryam Rajavi had been married to Masoud Rajavi's deputy, Mehdi Abrishamchi. The leadership asked all its members to undertake their own "ideological revolution" by identifying their personal shortcomings in self-criticism sessions. Immediately following Masoud and Maryam Rajavi's marriage, the military command of the MKO issued a directive stating:

In order to carry out your organizational duties under the present circumstances there is an urgent need to strengthen and deepen this ideological revolution. You must pay the necessary price by allocating sufficient time and resources for absorbing related teachings...Thus in your daily routines give priority to listening to radio messages and explanations provided by your commanders. Believe in the central committee's proclamation that "this ideological revolution will enhance the Mojahedin's capacities enormously; it will ever more unify and cleanse our ranks."...Be certain that your deep belief in the novel leadership of the new democratic revolution of the heroic Iranian people, meaning Masoud and Maryam Rajavi, and by making a direct connection with this leadership and setting it as your example...you will be able to correct your work habits and be able to deal with and resolve personal, organizational, and military difficulties.

The Social Division of MKO also issued a directive to the members initiating the self-criticism tradition within the organization:

To understand this great revolution...is to understand and gain a deep insight into the greatness of our new leadership, meaning the leadership of Masoud and Maryam. It is to believe in them as well as to show ideological and revolutionary obedience of them...By correcting your old work habits and by criticizing your individual as well as collective shortcomings, we shall gain much awareness in confronting our enemies...Report to your commanders and superiors in a comprehensive manner your progress, its results and outcomes that you gain from promoting and strengthening this ideological revolution.



In 1986, the French government engaged in direct talks with the Iranian government to normalize ties. As a result of these negotiations, the French government asked Masoud Rajavi to leave France. On June 7, 1986, he left Paris for Baghdad. The MKO relocated many of its resources from Paris to Iraq. On June 20, 1987, the MKO announced the formation of National Liberation Army (NLA) inside Iraq. For the next year, the NLA made several incursions into Iran as the Iran-Iraq war was entering its eighth year. The largest operation, code-named "Eternal Light," took place in the immediate aftermath of Iran's acceptance of the U.N.-brokered cease fire agreement on July 18, 1988 (see below).

After the end of the Iran-Iraq war, Saddam Hussein limited the MKO's military activities against Iran. The lack of military activity inside the MKO camps in Iraq coupled with an acceleration of the "ideological revolution" led to a rising tide of dissent inside the organization.

### III. Rise of Dissent inside the MKO

Former MKO members interviewed for this report cite the following reasons for their decision to leave the organization: military failure of the MKO to dislodge the Iranian government during the July 1988 military operation, forced mass divorces instituted as part of the "ideological revolution" and their persecution and torture by the MKO operatives during "security clearances" in 1994-1995. These three developments are discussed below.

#### Operation Eternal Light

The MKO trained its fighters under the banner of the National Liberation Army (NLA) inside Iraq. The NLA established several military camps in Iraq and trained thousands of guerrilla fighters to fight against the Iranian regime.

During the Iran-Iraq war, the NLA fighters regularly attacked Iranian troops along the Iran-Iraq border and made several incursions into Iran. The largest operation by the NLA took place after Iran accepted U.N. resolution 598, calling for a ceasefire between Iran and Iraq. Iran accepted the U.N. resolution on July 18, 1988. The NLA forces, estimated at nearly 7,000 fighters, were immediately mobilized for an attack on Iran. This operation was named Eternal Light.

The MKO's leadership, believing that the Iranian government was weak and susceptible to a popular uprising, reasoned that an incursion by the NLA forces would incite such an uprising and would pave the way for their forces to march to Tehran and bring



down the government. On the eve of launching the operation, Masoud Rajavi told his troops:

We will not be fighting alone; we will have the people on our side. They are tired of this regime, and especially since the ceasefire, they have every incentive to get rid of it forever. We will only have to act as their shields, protecting them from being easy targets for the [revolutionary] guards. Wherever we go there will be masses of citizens joining us, and the prisoners we liberate from jails will help us lead them towards victory. It will be like an avalanche, growing as it progresses. Eventually the avalanche will tear Khomeini's web apart. You don't need to take anything with you. We will be like fish swimming in a sea of people. They will give you whatever you need.

On July 24, 1988, the NLA fighters left their camps crossing the Iranian border at Khosravi checkpoint. They initially met little resistance as they approached the provincial capital of Kermanshah, nearly 100 miles inside Iranian territory. But Iran's military and Revolutionary Guard responded massively to defend Kermanshah, forcing the NLA fighters to retreat towards the Iraqi border after suffering heavy losses. According to Masoud Banisadr:

About ten years later, when the organization published names and photographs of martyrs from the operation for the first time, the number of martyred was announced as 1,304. Our other losses were officially 1,100 injured, of whom 11 subsequently died.

The NLA's defeat was a defining moment for many of its fighters who realized their military might was far from sufficient to overthrow Iran's government. "The level of pessimism and lack of trust in Rajavi's leadership was rising daily. Many were asking to leave the organization. Our broken spirits and injured bodies were a sign of the NLA's tactical and strategic defeat," wrote Mohammad Reza Eskandari, another former MKO member who was injured during the operation.

Masoud Banisadr also recalled the aftermath of the operation as a significant turning point for many MKO members:

Operation Forogh [Eternal Light] dashed our political hopes. Worse, it signified the end of ideology, of moral belief and expectation –for me and, as I soon discovered, many others. Our basic values no longer had any meaning and ceased to sustain us. We had all become actors playing to each other, encouraged by each other. This lie reached its intolerable climax when our "ideological leader" failed to admit his predictions and judgment had been wrong...once, we had been told that belief in Mojahedin was based on two premises: the sacrifice they were willing to make and their honesty.



After Forogh the well of honesty completely dried up, and from then on the organization rested on only one foundation: "sacrifice" and more "sacrifice."

### Compulsory Divorce

The "sacrifice" required of the members was articulated in a series of "ideological revolutions" promoted by the leadership. The leadership asked the members to divorce themselves from all physical and emotional attachments in order to enhance their "capacity for struggle." In case of married couples, this phase of the "ideological revolution" required them to renounce their emotional ties to their spouses through divorce. Masoud Banisadr reports how this process unfolded during an "ideological meeting for 'executive and high ranking members'" following MKO's defeat in Iran:

The first thing I was required to do in Baghdad was watch a videotape of an ideological meeting for "executive and high-ranking members." The meeting, called "Imam Zaman," started with a simple question: "To whom do we owe all our achievements and everything that we have?"... Rajavi did not claim, as I thought he might, to be the Imam of our times, but merely said we owed everything to Imam Zaman... The object was to show that we could reach Tehran if we were more united with our leader, as he was with Imam Zaman and God. He was ready to sacrifice everything he had (which in fact meant all of us!) for God, asserting that the only thing on his mind was doing the will of God,... We were expected to draw the conclusion that no "buffer" existed between Rajavi and Imam Zaman; yet there was a buffer between ourselves and him [Rajavi] ... which prevented us from seeing him clearly. This "buffer" was our weakness. If we could recognize that, we would see why and how we had failed in Operation Forogh [Eternal Light] and elsewhere. Masoud and Maryam [Rajavi] had no doubt that the buffer was in all our cases our existing spouse.

The organization's order for "mass divorce" caused much mental anguish and confusion. Masoud Banisadr details the atmosphere inside Ashraf Camp during this period:

The atmosphere on the base was completely different.... The mood was one of unremitting misery...It seemed everyone was in the process of the new phase of the "ideological revolution." The only legitimate discussion was about the revolution and the exchange of relevant experiences. Apart from that nothing was important; there was no outside world....Even poor single people were required to divorce their buffers, having no idea whom that meant; apparently the answer was to divorce all women or men for whom they harboured any feelings of love. Only later did I realize the organization demanded not only a legal divorce but also an emotional or "ideological" divorce.



I would have to divorce Anna [his wife] in my heart. Indeed I would have to learn to hate her as the buffer standing between our leader and myself.

Rajavi announced at the meeting that as our “ideological leader” he had ordered mass divorce from our spouses. He asked everyone to hand over our rings if we had not already done so. That meeting was the strangest and most repugnant I had ever attended. It went on for almost a week....

### “Security Clearances”

During late 1994 and early 1995, many members of the MKO were arrested by the organization’s operatives inside their camps in Iraq. They were interrogated and accused of spying for the Iranian government. They were released in mid-1995 after being forced to sign false confessions and stating their loyalty to the leadership. Five former MKO members interviewed for this report were arrested during this period: Farhad Javaheri-Yar, Ali Ghashghavi, Alireza Mirasgari, Akbar Akbari, and Abbas Sa-deghinejad. According to their testimonies—detailed in the next section—the purpose of these arrests was to intimidate dissidents and obtain false confessions from them stating that they were agents of Iranian government. This period was known as the “security clearance” (check-e amniyati).

In late 1994, the organization informed its fighters in Iraq of its plans to send small teams of fighters into Iran to carry out operations. Farhad Javaheri-Yar, a former member, told Human Rights Watch:

A message was broadcast on behalf of Masoud Rajavi stating that the domestic situation in Iran was chaotic. It called for volunteers who wanted to go inside Iran, perform revolutionary operations and instigate people to rise up. Many members responded immediately; long lines were formed by applicants. The application forms were nearly forty pages long and included hundreds of questions.

Another former member, Alireza Mirasgari, told Human Rights Watch that discontent and dissent were spreading throughout Camp Ashraf at this time:

During the second half of 1994, the wave of questions and dissent was reaching a climax inside the organization. Since most military activities had stopped, there was little to do and much time to reflect. Many fighters wanted to leave the organization. I began to note that some people around me were “disappearing.” I was told they had left for special operations inside Iran. However, later we found out that they had been arrested and imprisoned inside the camp. I was myself imprisoned in January 1995.



#### IV. Human Rights Abuses in the MKO Camps

Human rights abuses carried out by MKO leaders against dissident members ranged from prolonged incommunicado and solitary confinement to beatings, verbal and psychological abuse, coerced confessions, threats of execution, and torture that in two cases led to death.

The testimonies of the former MKO members indicate that the organization used three types of detention facilities inside its camps in Iraq. The interviewees described one type as small residential units, referred to as guesthouses (mihmansara), inside the camps. The MKO members who requested to leave the organization were held in these units during much of which time they were kept incommunicado. They were not allowed to leave the premises of their unit, to meet or talk with anyone else in the camp, or to contact their relatives and friends in the outside world.

Karim Haqi, a former high ranking MKO member who served as the head of security for Masoud Rajavi, told Human Rights Watch:

I was the head of security for Masoud Rajavi in 1991. They could not believe that I wanted to separate from the organization. I was confined inside a building called Iskan together with my wife and our six month old child. Iskan was the site of a series of residential units that used to house married couples before ideological divorces were mandated. The organization had raised a tall wall around this area. Its interior perimeter was protected by barbed wire, and guards kept it under surveillance from observation towers. While we were under detention, the organization reduced our food rations, subjected us to beatings and verbal abuses and also intimidated us by making threats of executions.

Mohammad Reza Eskandari and his wife Tahereh Eskandari, two former members of the MKO, also told Human Rights Watch of being detained inside various guest houses after requesting to leave the MKO in 1991:

The organization had taken our passports and identification documents upon our arrival in the camp. When we expressed our intention to leave, they never returned our documents. We were held in detention centers in Iskan as well as other locations. We were sent to a refugee camp outside the city of Ramadi called al-Tash. Life in al-Tash was extremely harsh, more like a process of gradual death. The MKO operatives continued to harass us even in Al-Tash. Eventually in September 1992, we received refugee status from Holland and were able to leave al-Tash.



The second type of detention inside the MKO camps was called bangali shodan by the witnesses, referring to solitary confinement inside a small pre-fabricated trailer room (bangal). Dissident members who requested to leave the organization as well as ordinary members were detained in the bangals. Detention inside a bangal was considered a form of MKO punishment for members whom the leadership considered to have made mistakes. They were expected to reflect on their mistakes and to write self-criticism reports while in detention.

Masoud Banisadr, formerly the top diplomatic representative of the MKO in Europe and North America, wrote of his experience of being detained in a bangal when Masoud Rajavi and other high-ranking members met with him and decided he had been “corrupted:”

Afterwards my masoul [supervisor] advised me to go to a bungalow and think. I had become a bangali, which meant being put in solitary confinement, ordered to do nothing but think and write. It was an extreme kind of mental torture, and there were members who preferred to kill themselves than to suffer it.

The third type of detention reported by the witnesses encompassed imprisonment, physical torture and interrogations inside secret prisons within the MKO camps. These prisons were primarily used for persecution of political dissidents. Their existence was unknown to most members. The witnesses who suffered under this form of detention told Human Rights Watch that they were unaware that the organization maintained such prisons until they experienced it firsthand.

One of the witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch, Mohammad Hussein Sobhani, spent eight-and-a-half years in solitary confinement, from September 1992 to January 2001, inside the MKO camps. Another witness, Javaheri-Yar, underwent five years of solitary confinement in the MKO prisons, from November 1995 to December 2000. Both were high-ranking members who intended to leave the organization but were told that, because of their extensive inside knowledge, they could not be allowed to do so. They were imprisoned and eventually transferred to the Iraqi authorities, who then held them in Abu Ghraib.

Four other witnesses Human Rights Watch interviewed were detained during the “security clearances” of 1994-1995 because they were suspected by the MKO of harboring dissident views. Ali Ghasghavi, Alireza Mir Asgari, Ali Akbari, and Abbas Sadeghinejad were severely tortured, subjected to harsh interrogation techniques and forced to sign false confessions stating their links to Iranian intelligence agents.



Abbas Sadeghinejad, Ali Ghashghavi, and Alireza Mir Asgari, three former members of MKO interviewed by Human Rights Watch, witnessed the death of Parviz Ahmadi in February 1995 inside an internal MKO prison in Iraq. The three shared a prison cell during the security clearance arrests in February 1995. Parviz Ahmadi was a dissident member who was held in the same cell. Ali Ghashghavi told Human Rights Watch that Parviz Ahmadi was taken for interrogations on his second day of being held in the prison cell:

It was the start of Ramadan [February 1995] when the prison guards came to fetch Parviz Ahmadi. He was gone for a couple of hours. When they brought him back he was badly beaten and died soon afterwards.

Abbas Sadeghinezhad, who was also present in the cell, recalled the final moments of Parviz Ahmadi's life:

The prison door opened, and a prisoner was thrown into the cell. He fell on his face. At first we didn't recognize him. He was beaten up severely. We turned him around; it was Parviz Ahmadi taken for interrogations just a few hours before. Ahmadi was a unit commander. His bones were broken all over, his legs were inflamed; he was falling into a coma. We tried to help him but after only ten minutes he died as I was holding his head on my lap. The prison guard opened the door and pulled Ahmadi's lifeless body out.

Alireza Mir Asgari, who was also present, corroborated the circumstances of Parviz Ahmadi's death. In contrast, the MKO's publication *Mojahed* of March 2, 1998, lists Parviz Ahmadi as an MKO "martyr" killed by Iranian intelligence agents.

Abbas Sadeghinejad told Human Rights Watch that he had earlier witnessed the death of another prisoner, Ghorbanali Torabi, after Torabi was returned from an interrogation session to a prison cell that he shared with Sadeghinejad.

## V. Testimonies

### Mohammad Hussein Sobhani

Mohammad Hussein Sobhani spent eight-and-a-half years in solitary confinement inside the MKO's main camp in Iraq, Camp Ashraf, from September 1992 to January 2001. He was subsequently held in Abu Ghraib prison and left Iraq in 2002.

Sobhani first came in contact with the MKO in 1977, a year before the anti-monarchy revolution. By 1979, he was working "professionally and full time" with the organization. When the headquarters of the armed wing of the organization relocated inside Iraq, he



followed suit. By 1991, he had risen in the ranks of the organization and had become a member of the Central Committee. However, ever since the “ideological revolution,” when divorces were mandated, he became uncomfortable with the path pursued by the leadership. His differences with the leadership of Masoud and Maryam Rajavi and other members of the Central Committee reached a climax in 1992. Masoud Rajavi argued for remaining in Iraq regardless of the end of the Iran-Iraq war and Saddam Hussein’s defeat in the first Gulf War in 1991, he said. Rajavi still hoped that fighting between Iran and Iraq would resume, and based the organization’s strategy on such a development. Sobhani says he found the possibility of a new war highly unlikely given the dismal state of Iraq’s armed forces. Other members of the Central Committee saw his arguments as a challenge to the Rajavis’ leadership:

As long as my criticisms were mild, I was left alone. But as soon as I persevered in my questioning, their behavior changed dramatically. In the beginning, I discussed my concerns personally with the leadership, Maryam and Masoud Rajavi. I also brought up my concerns with other members of the Central Committee. These discussions reached a dead-end. Once they became certain that I didn’t share their views, on August 28, 1992, they convened a meeting (neshast taiin taklif) to determine my faith and to decide if I was staying with the organization or not. The process began with intimidation, verbal abuse, and beatings. Of course, since I was a high ranking official I was treated better than ordinary members. I was told that my criticisms and questions were just an excuse to quit the struggle. Their conclusion was that I was a quitter 49 (borideh) and didn’t have the strength to continue the struggle any longer.

On August 31, 1992, Sobhani was moved to a prison and kept under solitary confinement for the next eight-and-a-half years.

After the first two months in prison, all of my beliefs in the organization fell apart. Up to that point I considered my differences with them as a matter of divergent political views; I wasn’t questioning the MKO’s underlying essence. I used to mark my prison walls each time I was subjected to severe beatings. There were many occasions of lesser beatings, but on eleven occasions I was beaten mercilessly using wooden sticks and thick leather belts.

Sobhani was handed over to Iraqi officials in January 2001. He spent one month in mukhabarat prison and then transferred to Abu Ghraib. He was held in Abu Ghraib until January 21, 2002, when he was repatriated to Iran in exchange for Iraqi POWs. In Iran, he was detained and interrogated by the Iranian government. After three days, he escaped from a low security detention center and fled Iran. He is currently living in



Europe.

### Yasser Ezati

Yasser Ezati was born on May 27, 1980, to Hasan Ezati and Akram Ghadim-al-ayam. He said that his father, also known as Nariman, was a well-known interrogator inside the MKO prisons. Yasser's mother died during one of the MKO's military operations.

Ezati moved to Iraq with his family at the age of three and grew up inside the MKO military camps. During the 1991 Gulf war, Ezati and other children inside the camps were separated from their parents and sent outside Iraq. During the next three years, Ezati lived with three different families in Canada. These families were MKO sympathizers. In the summer of 1994, the MKO moved Ezati to Cologne, Germany, where he lived in a group-house for the MKO children. The organization recruited Ezati for military training when he was seventeen years old and sent him to Iraq in June 1997.

After the first six months in Iraq, I realized I had no desire to stay. In Europe I had an image of a democratic organization, but in Iraq I realized the extent of censorship and control. I wanted to leave. I was repeatedly told the only way out was to go to Iran. I was too afraid to go to Iran.

Ezati was extremely uncomfortable with the many means of thought control enforced inside the camps. He said there were many gatherings where high ranking officials lectured members not to think of any issue except those relating to internal MKO operations. "We had to write self-criticism reports on a regular basis. If we had any thoughts outside of the organizational framework we had to report them," he said. Ezati's most daunting experience took place in summer of 2001:

It was a gathering called to'emeh [lure, or bait] that lasted four consecutive months. All of the camp members were present during these sessions. At this time the number of dissidents who wanted to leave the organization was growing daily. First, Masoud Rajavi talked about the Mojahedin's basic ideology. He then talked about the organization's strategy, and finally he addressed the issue of those members wishing to separate from the organization. His purpose was to intimidate members and to say that anyone who wants to leave is a traitor. These sessions were held from morning to evening. Dissident members were brought in front of the audience and forced to self-criticize their actions and thoughts. They were expected to conclude by saying that they will remain with the organization. As soon as someone would speak their minds or criticize the organization, the attendees would attack him/her mercilessly using harsh verbal abuses. Anyone who dared to ask to leave the organization would immediately be



labeled an agent of the Iranian government. It was psychologically devastating. I had to pledge my allegiance to the MKO numerous times during these gatherings. After four consecutive months of psychological pressures, I ended up signing documents that I would stay with the organization.

After the American occupation of Iraq, Ezati managed to escape Camp Ashraf in June 2004. He is living in Europe.

Farhad Javaheri-Yar

Farhad Javaheri-Yar is a former fighter with the MKO in Iraq. He served in various capacities in intelligence and security operations. In 1995, he became aware of dissident members being imprisoned inside the MKO camps in Iraq. He wrote a letter to his superiors requesting to be released from his duties and expressed his desire to leave the organization. His superiors tried repeatedly to intimidate him into staying. After his refusal, he was incarcerated in various prisons inside the MKO camps in Iraq from November 1995 to December 2000. He was subsequently turned over to the Iraqi officials and held in Abu Ghraib prison until January 2002, when he was repatriated to Iran.

Javaheri-Yar joined the MKO in August 1982 in Tehran and became active in their underground armed resistance. He was arrested in October 1984 by the Iranian authorities and spent the following four years inside Evin, Ghazal Hisar, and Gohardasht prisons in Iran. Upon his release, he contacted MKO operatives in Europe and was smuggled to Karachi and from there to Iraq. He entered Iraq in 1989 and became an active member of the MKO's armed wing.

Javaheri-Yar became disillusioned with the MKO in 1995 after learning from a number of other MKO cadres that they had been recently imprisoned by the organization:

In July 1995, I returned to Camp Ashraf from a reconnaissance mission. During the preceding months, I had noticed a number of my friends had "disappeared." I was told that they were inside Iran to carry out missions. I met two of them, Akbar Akbari and Ali Taleghani, who told me that they were imprisoned inside Camp Ashraf during this period and were forced to sign false confessions indicating their ties to Iranian intelligence agents and [promising] that they would never leave the MKO.

I wrote a number of reports for my superior. In these letters I expressed my disapproval of the mistreatment of members and submitted my resignation. My request was repeatedly ignored.

Javaheri-Yar persevered with his request to leave the MKO, but was told that the



organization could not relieve him of his duties because of his extensive knowledge of MKO's activities. Once Javaheri-Yar realized he would not be free to leave, he escaped from Camp Ashraf on November 28, 1995 and attempted to reach the Jordanian border. On November 30, 1995, he was arrested by Iraqi security forces near the city of Tikrit. He pleaded with the Iraqi forces not to return him to the MKO camp, but his pleas were ignored and he was handed over to the MKO forces in Camp Ashraf. During the next five years he was held in solitary confinement in various locations inside the MKO camps, from November 1995 to December 2000.

During the first two months, I was kept inside a pre-fabricated trailer room called a bangal. I was told that I could not leave the camp but could resume life inside the camp if I chose to do menial labor, such as making bread or sweeping streets. I refused their offer, and their response was harsh. I was moved to a prison cell in Avenue 400 of Camp Ashraf. The cell's dimensions were three by two-and-a-half meters [nine feet by eight feet]. It was connected to a narrow hallway—one meter [three feet] wide and three-and-a-half meters [ten feet] long—that led to a small toilet and sink.

In February 1996, I made very loud verbal protests from inside my cell. To punish me, they confined me inside a bathroom for three consecutive weeks. I was miserable. There was no room to stretch or lie down. The tiled floor was wet and cold. It was a terrifying experience.

The MKO's leadership, including Masoud Rajavi, promised Javaheri-Yar that he would be released "soon," but each time they broke their promise. Javaheri-Yar was imprisoned in solitary confinement inside Camp Ashraf, as well as Camp Parsian, until December 2000, when he was turned over to the Iraqi intelligence forces (mukhabarat). He spent one month in a mukhabarat prison before being transferred to Abu Ghraib prison. He was repatriated to Iran on January 21, 2002. He left Iran and is living in Europe.

#### Ali Ghashghavi

Ali Ghashghavi joined the MKO as a fighter in Iraq in 1989. He was arrested in February 1995 during the "security clearance" phase and was imprisoned for four months in Camp Ashraf. He told Human Rights Watch of his experience during this period:

One night in January 1995, I was called over by my superior and told that a member of the Central Committee wanted me in her office. I was excited to be meeting such a high level official at such an unlikely hour. I assumed there was much importance attached to this meeting. We got into a military vehicle; it was around midnight. They



took me to a place inside Camp Ashraf called Iskan. It is at the far corner of the camp where a series of apartment buildings were used to house families [before they were forcibly broken up]. It was a rather isolated spot— barren desert and frighteningly secluded.

There were a few people inside, five or six. I was taken to an empty room and told to wait. A few minutes later, another member, Hussein Nizam, was brought in. Hussein Nazim had spent many years inside the Islamic Republic's prisons, so he knew something else was happening. I was somewhat naive and didn't have much of a clue.

Suddenly the door opened and a group of people attacked us mercilessly, blindfolded us, tied our hands behind our backs, and put us inside a car. We were driven around for half an hour. We stopped inside an area that was approximately at the center of the camp. I didn't know this was a prison until I was taken there. The prison was on Avenue 400 of Camp Ashraf near the water tanker. Until then, I had assumed that explosives or sensitive documents were guarded inside.

Our clothes were taken from us and we put on prison garb. We were led to a large cell holding nearly twenty-five prisoners. The prison cell was on the ground floor of the building; there was a small window near the ceiling for air circulation. A small toilet and shower were built at one end of the cell. There was a period when prisoners were taken on a daily basis for interrogations and beatings. One method was to kick the prisoner's legs and knees repeatedly with military boots with metal covers on the front.

Another method was to put a thick rope around the prisoner's neck and drag him on the ground. Sometimes prisoners returned to the cell with extremely swollen necks—their head and neck as big as a pillow. I experienced the pain of leg-beatings firsthand. During one of my interrogation sessions, the interrogator told me that if I don't give them guarantees that I will stay with the leaders forever, he would kill me right there and then. I asked him "what worthier guarantee there could be than my coming here to join your ranks and fight against Khomeini?" He replied that now that the ideological revolution had been instituted and life was harder, people like me couldn't bear it and wanted to leave. He said, "I can see it in your eyes that you are dying to quit the organization."

He went to the next room while he told me how he was going to beat me up badly. He changed his shoes and put on a pair of these military boots. He came back, and two hefty guards held me. He began kicking my legs repeatedly. My legs are still unbalanced from these beatings. Interrogations sometimes lasted for up to thirty or thirty-six hours nonstop.



Ghashghavi was released in May 1995, after a meeting with Masoud Rajavi who told him, "The judicial branch of the National Liberation Army has acquitted you." After this experience Ghashghavi, explored ways to escape Camp Ashraf. On March 20, 1998, he was imprisoned for forty-five days and then turned over to Iraqi intelligence agents. He spent another forty-five days inside the mukhabarat prison in central Baghdad before being transferred to Abu Ghraib. He was repatriated to Iran on January 21, 2002. In Iran, he was interrogated and brought before a court that sentenced him to nine years in prison. After sixteen months of imprisonment, he was given a forty-eight hour release to visit his family. He used this opportunity to escape and leave Iran. In August 2003, he fled Iran and is currently living in Europe.

#### Alireza Mir Asgari

Alireza Mir Asgari was a deputy director of one of the MKO's military units in 1994 when he started to have concerns about the organization's links with the Iraqi military. In January 1995, he was arrested and imprisoned. In June 1995, he was released after signing a contract promising to remain with the MKO's forces. He was arrested again in 1998 and spent eight months in solitary confinement. In 2001, he arranged to escape, but his plan was discovered and he was imprisoned again until 2003, when he was turned over to Iraqi forces who then abandoned him along the Iran-Iraq border. He described his sudden arrest in 1995:

I was arrested without notice on January 29, 1995. I was told to go to a meeting with a team who were preparing for operations in Iran. These kinds of discussions were a regular part of my duties. I was taken to a room and told to wait. Hasan Mohasel, one of the MKO's top intelligence officers, came into the room and put a note in front of me saying that I had been arrested because I was an agent of Iranian intelligence and had infiltrated the Liberation Army. I couldn't believe what was happening; I thought it was a joke and started to laugh. But Hasan Mohasel cursed me and told me to stand against the wall. Suddenly two or three more people entered the room and began to blindfold me and to tie my hands behind my back. I was in total shock. They put me in a car and drove around for forty-five minutes inside the camp. I was taken to a building; I didn't know where it was. Hasan Sadat Darbandi, also known as Adel, removed my blindfold and threw me into a cell with many other prisoners. I could not believe it; I thought there had been a coup inside the organization. Each day, a number of prisoners were taken for interrogation. They were beaten badly; after they were brought back, their heads and faces were tremendously swollen.

After a couple of days, it was my turn to be taken for interrogation. They asked me



why I had joined the MKO. I told them I came here to fight Khomeini's government, but they said that wasn't true. During the first couple of days of interrogation, they beat me mercilessly. It was very depressing; I really wanted to commit suicide. I was only seventeen years old when I left Iran and came to Iraq to join the MKO. I had spent my entire adult life in their camps.

Eventually, I gave up and agreed to sign the forced confessions stating that I had ties to Iranian intelligence. I was taken to a meeting with Masoud Rajavi, who told me that if I stayed for another two years, they would release me and send me to Spain. Mir Asgari was released in June 1995. He spent the next two years waiting for the organization to release and transfer him to Spain. However, he was told that because of his wealth of information, he could not be released. His protests led to his imprisonment again:

On March 5, 1998, I was taken to a prison where my old case from 1995 was reopened. They said that based on my own confession, I was an Iranian agent and could not be trusted. I spent eight months in solitary confinement. During this period, I was told that my sister in Iran had been arrested and executed. Later I found this to be untrue.

After recanting his request to leave Iraq, Mir Asgari was released. Since the organization was not going to allow him to leave, he started to design an escape plan. His plan to escape was discovered, and he was arrested again. He was kept in solitary confinement for nearly two years, from 2001 to 2003. A few months prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, in February 2003, Mir Asgari was turned over to the Iraqi forces who took him to the Iran-Iraq border along the Arvandrood River [Shatt al-Arab] and released him there. He is living in Europe.

#### Akbar Akbari

Akbar Akbari became familiar with the MKO on the eve of the Iranian revolution in 1978. He started his professional association with the MKO in February 1979. In June 1984, he was arrested by the Iranian authorities and was imprisoned in Iran for more than four years. Within a few months of his release in September 1988, Akbari left Iran to join the MKO operations in Iraq.

In 1993, he decided to leave the organization and wrote a number of letters to his superiors asking to be released.

My supervisor was Mehdi Abrishamchi, who was one of the high ranking members of the Central Committee. After I wrote him a letter expressing my intention to leave the organization, he called me to his office, tore the letter into pieces, threw it in a garbage



basket, and said, "I don't want to hear of this anymore. You are not to discuss it with anyone." I was also called to private meetings with other high ranking members who reinforced the same message.

Akbari was supervisor of a section in Communications Department (Setad Ravabit). He carried out many sensitive tasks for the organization, including working as a personal body guard of Masoud Rajavi. Akbari was arrested in December 1993 and held inside a prison in Camp Ashraf.

The interrogators were extremely rough. From the moment I entered the room, I was subjected to beatings. I was put on a chair that was fixed to the floor. My hands and feet were tied to the chair, I couldn't move at all. I was beaten with a thick hose and kicked repeatedly with a military boot. My interrogator also used a pair of heavy plastic slippers to hit me in the face and head.

I was asked to confess to being an agent of the Iranian government. After a few interrogation sessions, the interrogator dictated a confession letter that he asked me to sign. Then he told me, "Now it is proven that you are an agent who has infiltrated our organization."

Akbari was then taken with a group of prisoners to meet Masoud Rajavi. Rajavi told them that he had "forgiven" them and they could return to their duties. He was let out of the prison in June 1995. Akbari escaped Camp Ashraf in February 1999 and set out for the Jordanian border. He was arrested by Iraqi security forces in Ramadi and handed over to the MKO.

When I was returned to Camp Ashraf, I was taken to a room where Hasan Mohasel told me I would be imprisoned because I was an infiltrator. High ranking members of the organization were present. I was taken to a fort called Ghaleh Afsaneh and kept in solitary confinement for a full year, from February 1999 to March 2000.

In March 2000, Akbari was turned over to Iraqi security forces who took him to Abu Ghraib. Akbari was in Abu Ghraib until January 21, 2002, when he was repatriated to Iran in exchange for Iraqi POWs. He was detained and interrogated by the Iranian authorities. He said that during a weekend release to visit his family, he escaped and fled Iran. He is now living in Europe.

Sayed Amir Mowaseghi

Sayed Amir Mowaseghi joined the MKO in 1984 and was imprisoned by the Iranian authorities from 1984-1987. After his release, he went to Pakistan, and from there was



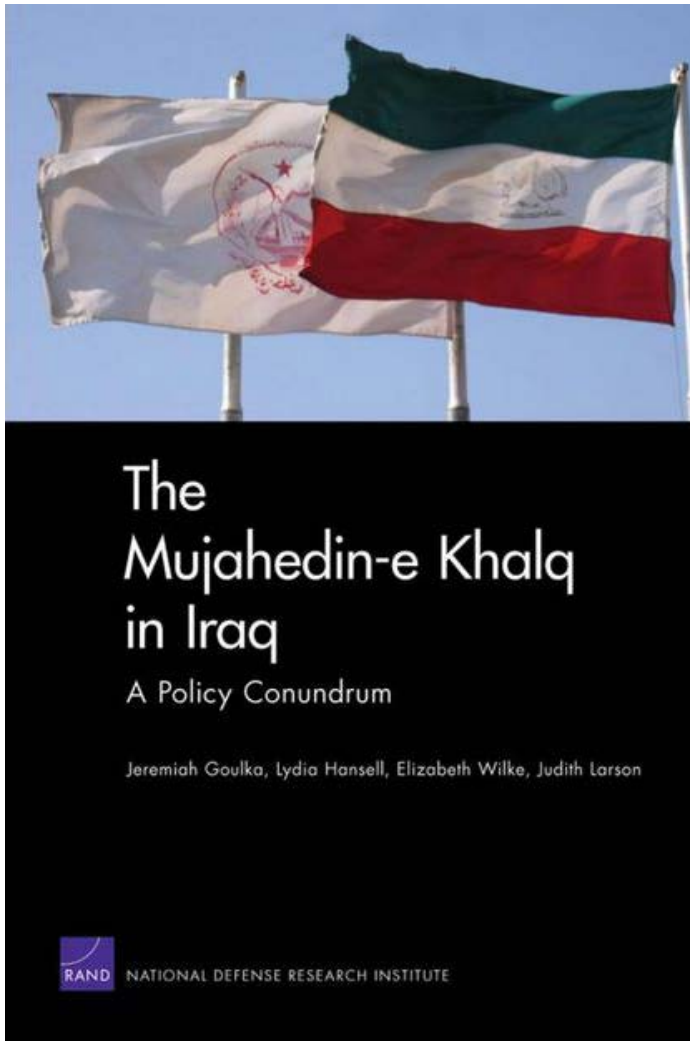
able to travel to Iraq, where he joined the MKO forces in June 1988.

In 2001, he chose to leave the organization, but was not allowed. A “court session” was convened in September 2001 in the presence of Maryam and Masoud Rajavi, who refused to grant him permission to leave. Subsequently, he was subjected to verbal abuse and humiliation:

I was taken to a large gathering of nearly 600 people. They led me through the crowd; I was spat on, kicked and verbally abused. I was moved to a trailer, they called it bangal, and kept there in solitary confinement until June 2, 2002, when I was handed over to the Iraqi forces. The Iraqis took me to Abu Ghraib, and I remained there until I was repatriated to Iran on 18 March 2003.



## The Mujahedin-e Khalq in Iraq A Policy Conundrum



The RAND Corporation is one of America's leading think tanks and research institutes, dedicated to providing research to US policy makers in various fields.

The research institute published a 105-page report on the MKO in 2009 titled "The Mujahedin-e Khalq in Iraq: A Policy Conundrum." The monograph, considered as the most thorough analysis to date of the MEK's cultish aspects, is the result of 15 months of intensive research by a team of four in the United States and Iraq. They have also paid a visit to Camp Ashraf, where they were given in-depth tours by MEK leaders and were allowed to observe meetings between leaders of MKO and JIATF and TF-134 officers.

The report concludes that the US military officers' lack of instruction regarding MKO's "past activities or its cult characteristics" allowed the



group to take a “seemingly cooperative stance.”

The opening pages of this monograph deals with the controversial status of the MKO as protected persons and then moves on to describe its “fraudulent recruiting practices”.

According to the report, an examination of MKO activities establishes its cultic practices and its deceptive recruitment and public relations strategies.

The Mujahedin-e Khalq in Iraq

A Policy Conundrum

Jeremiah Goulka, Lydia Hansell, Elizabeth Wilke, Judith Larson

Sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense

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NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Preface

This monograph presents the results of one of several studies performed for Multi-National Force–Iraq, Task Force 134 (Detainee Operations) (TF-134), to provide analytical tools and insights intended to help future field commanders and policymakers design and perform detention operations in irregular military environments.

During Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), coalition forces faced an unusual detainee issue centering on the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MeK), an exiled Iranian cult dissident group that Saddam Hussein had invited into Iraq to fight on his behalf during the Iran-Iraq War. The United States designated the MeK a foreign terrorist organization in 1997 and a belligerent enemy force in OIF in 2003. Shortly after the invasion, coalition forces accepted a cease-fire from the MeK, disarmed the group, and consolidated its members at one of the MeK’s camps.

In 2007, Major General Douglas M. Stone, U.S. Marine Corps, who at the time commanded detainee operations in Iraq, asked RAND to provide a rigorous analysis of the circumstances surrounding coalition protection of the MeK. This work should be of interest to policymakers, military commanders, or researchers who are involved with the assessment or planning of detainee operations, as well as to Iraqi government officials and commanders with responsibility for their government’s policies concerning



the MeK and similar groups. This monograph reflects the research that RAND conducted between October 2007 and January 2009, both in Iraq and in the United States. This research was sponsored by TF-134 and conducted within the International Security and Defense Policy Center of the RAND National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Unified Combatant Commands, the Department of the Navy, the Marine Corps, the defense agencies, and the defense Intelligence Community.

## Summary

### The Mujahedin-e Khalq Conundrum

From the early weeks of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) until January 2009, coalition forces detained and provided security for members of the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MeK), an exiled Iranian dissident cult group living in Iraq. At the outset of OIF, the MeK was designated a hostile force, largely because of its history of cooperation with Saddam Hussein's military in the Iran-Iraq War and its alleged involvement in his suppression of the Shia and Kurdish uprisings that followed the Gulf War of 1991. Since 1997, the MeK has been listed as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) by the United States because of the attacks it has conducted against Iranian targets since the time of its founding in 1965—and particularly due to the assassinations of three U.S. Army officers and three U.S. civilian contractors in Tehran during the 1970s, which were attributed to the MeK. Despite their belief that the MeK did not pose a security threat, coalition forces detained the group and provided protection to prevent the Iraqi government from expelling MeK members to Iran, even though Iran had granted the MeK rank and file amnesty from prosecution. The coalition's decision to provide security for an FTO was very controversial because it placed the United States in the position of protecting a group that it had labeled a terrorist organization. Among many resulting complications, this policy conundrum has made the United States vulnerable to charges of hypocrisy in the war on terrorism.

### Focus of This Study

The research reported here explores the circumstances surrounding the MeK's detention. It focuses in particular on whether MeK members were taken into custody and detained under the appropriate terms, the effects of their designation as "protected persons" under the Fourth Geneva Convention, and options for relocat-



ing the MeK either within Iraq or in other countries. It discusses lessons that can be extracted from the MeK experience and used to prevent similar situations from occurring in the future. It also suggests actions that might be taken to solve the immediate problem of relocating MeK members now that the government of Iraq (GOI) has taken responsibility for the MeK pursuant to the status of forces agreement between the United States and Iraq that took effect on January 1, 2009.

### The Coalition's Cease-Fire Agreement with the MeK

In April 2003, after a brief period of conflict, the MeK requested a cease-fire. Because they had no information about the characteristics of the group, the special forces officers who received the request were persuaded by MeK leaders (who spoke fluent English) that, prior to the invasion, the group had offered to fight on the coalition's behalf and that many of its members had been educated in the United States. Based on these claims, which turned out to be false, the officers accepted the MeK's request for a cease-fire under terms that allowed the MeK to keep its weapons.

In May 2003, the Washington agencies agreed to direct coalition forces to secure the MeK's surrender and to disarm the group. Again, the coalition officers who negotiated with the MeK leadership were dissuaded from carrying out this instruction. Rather than insisting upon the MeK's surrender, they accepted a cease-fire agreement under which the MeK would be disarmed and its (at the time) 3,800 members would be consolidated and detained through assigned residence (rather than internment) at the MeK's largest facility, Camp Ashraf, which is located approximately 40 miles north of Baghdad.

### The MeK's Controversial Status as Protected Persons

The types of protections required for detainees are dictated by their legal status under international humanitarian law (the law of war). However, coalition forces took no action to determine the legal status of the MeK for more than a year. This was due partly to confusion at the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) about which law to enforce. The United States had adopted the contentious policy of not applying the Geneva Conventions to foreign terrorists fighting in Iraq, though it did apply them to enemy forces in OIF, and OIF planners had named the MeK an enemy force. To further complicate the issue, the MeK asserted that it had not engaged coalition forces in combat, and many officers responsible for detaining the MeK accepted this claim, even though at least one special forces casualty had resulted from combat with the MeK.



When there is uncertainty as to whether persons can properly be classified as combatants, the Third Geneva Convention requires that each have his or her case determined by a competent tribunal. Coalition forces formed a joint interagency task force (JIATF) to gather information on the MeK members at Camp Ashraf and established the MeK Review Board to consider their cases. In the interim, all MeK members were given the protection required for captured combatants, who are referred to as prisoners of war.

But in June 2004, without tribunal review, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld determined the legal status of the MeK. Instead of prisoners of war, he designated MeK members as civilian “protected persons” under the terms of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Because MeK members would likely have qualified as combatants, this presumes that they had not engaged coalition forces in battle. Moreover, he applied the designation to the entire group, denying tribunal review to each individual. His decision controverted DOS, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recommendations. It has proven to be extremely controversial because it appeared that the United States selectively chose to apply the Geneva Conventions to a designated terrorist organization and, further, to grant it a special status.

### Relocating the MeK

In December 2003, the Iraqi Governing Council passed a resolution calling for the expulsion of the MeK from Iraq. Subsequently, the interim Iraqi government and then the GOI reaffirmed this pledge. Based on the presumption that the MeK’s members would be persecuted if they returned to Iran and that returning them would be a “gift” to the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), the United States announced its intention to seek the MeK’s relocation elsewhere. However, the central question remained: Where could they go? According to the Geneva Conventions, when detainees are released from assigned residence or internment, they may be

- reestablished in their country of residence prior to detention
- resettled or “accommodated” in third or neutral countries
- repatriated to the country of their nationality.

Governing each of these options is the overarching principle of nonrefoulement, a key concept in international humanitarian law, refugee law, and human rights law. Although



variously defined in different treaties, in the case of the MeK, nonrefoulement prohibits the forced transfer of any individual member to a country where there are substantial grounds for believing that he or she would be in danger of being subjected to persecution because of his or her political opinions or religious beliefs or to torture for any reason.

Of the three options for relocation, the only viable one for most MeK members is repatriation to Iran. For six years, Iran has offered amnesty to the MeK rank and file. Despite the broad-based expectation that the IRI would persecute all former MeK members who returned to the country, that has not proven to be the case for the approximately 250 individuals who have already been repatriated through a process managed by the ICRC.

Nonrefoulement does not prohibit forcible deportation in general, but it does forbid forcible deportation when an individual faces a substantial risk of persecution or torture. The likelihood of persecution should not be presumed. Instead, each person's case should be considered individually, preferably by an impartial organization, such as the ICRC, and each individual must be interviewed. Both objective and subjective factors should be considered when analyzing the risk that the individual might face if repatriated.

Several factors suggest that repatriation to Iran is appropriate for the MeK rank and file. First, a significant, indeterminate portion of the MeK rank and file in Iraq were at Camp Ashraf only because of the MeK's fraudulent recruiting practices. For example, Iranians taken prisoner by Saddam's forces during the Iran-Iraq War were promised repatriation to Iran if they transferred from Iraqi prison camps to MeK facilities. Iranian expatriates in third countries were told that they would be granted asylum in European countries. They were also given offers of employment as translators, along with promises of land and spouses. Some Iranians were enticed to MeK camps by offers of free visits with family members. Others who paid to be smuggled out of Iran found themselves trafficked to MeK camps rather than to their intended destinations. Although the exact figure is not known, it is estimated that approximately 70 percent of MeK members now in Iraq joined the group after its relocation there and subsequent decline in popularity. Many of them were victims of these fraudulent recruiting practices.

In addition, these victims as well as the MeK's true volunteers (most of whom joined



prior to the MeK's exile from Iran) have been trapped in a cult environment: The MeK leadership has confiscated their identity documents, threatened them with persecution in Iran and prosecution for illegal immigration in Iraq, and prevented those who wished to do so from returning to their home country. Therefore, humanitarian considerations regarding the MeK must not assume that the wishes of the MeK's leadership are the same as those of the rank and file, particularly those who were deceived and then trapped at MeK camps.

The GOI can also achieve its goal of ejecting the bulk of the MeK population while similarly improving its international standing by supporting repatriation efforts that are conducted according to international norms. International humanitarian and human rights laws require Iraq to provide individual MeK leaders or members whom the ICRC determines should not be deported because of nonrefoulement with rights of residence or to seek their resettlement in a third country; Iraq may also prosecute them.

In light of ongoing vows by the GOI to deport the MeK and shut down Camp Ashraf, in December 2008, the GOI provided written assurances to Washington that, when Iraqi security forces took responsibility for Camp Ashraf, the MeK would be treated humanely and that members would not be forcibly transferred to a country where they might face persecution. GOI officials have stated their intention to work with the ICRC to pursue repatriation to Iran. Meanwhile, the JIATF will monitor the transition and provide guidance to Iraqi security forces.

### Major Challenges and Lessons Learned

The MeK was a minor issue in the overall conflict in Iraq, but it was an important one because the issues that emerged in the course of detaining the MeK were, in many ways, a microcosm of the larger challenges posed by detainee operations in general. Thus, both the missteps and the small successes along the way provide valuable lessons for improving how the United States deals with "special populations" in future operations.

This study identified five principal problem areas that require attention:

1. OIF planners did not adequately define their 1. military goals and objectives regarding the MeK. Although the MeK had FTO status and had been designated a hostile target, coalition forces were given no military objectives regarding the group except to secure its surrender, and that outcome was never achieved. Without a clear goal, the coalition's activities at Camp Ashraf began—and largely remained—ad hoc.



2. Coalition forces were not prepared to deal with a special population like the MeK. The officers who served on the JIATF that was responsible for managing the MeK at Camp Ashraf had little or no lead time to prepare for their assignments and had no time between changes of command to share hard-won experience. No information or training was provided regarding the Iranian (Persian) and Iraqi (Arab) cultures in general or the MeK in particular, and, in the early days of OIF, no interpreters were assigned specifically to the JIATF. Most importantly, JIATF military members soon discovered that they were dealing with a cult. Despite the special challenges posed by cult behavior, those in charge of detainee operations were given no training on how to manage a cult. Thus, the ability of the MeK leadership to create the appearance of cooperation and to manipulate coalition perceptions of the group's intentions seriously hampered the overall detainment process and, in particular, repatriation efforts.

3. Coalition forces did not establish a dominant role at Camp Ashraf. Although the coalition disarmed the MeK and consolidated its members at the largest MeK facility, it took very little action to limit the MeK's freedom of movement. There is no fence around the approximately 15-square-mile facility; further, the coalition guarded only the main gate and did not search all vehicles entering or exiting the camp on a daily basis. Lack of manpower has meant that the coalition has never conducted a thorough search of Camp Ashraf. The MeK was allowed to establish a liaison office on the coalition's nearby forward operating base (FOB) rather than at Camp Ashraf, to hang its propaganda posters in recreation areas at the FOB, and to hold conferences to promote its agenda. Approximately 14 U.S. soldiers were killed and 60 wounded as they provided security for convoys escorting MeK members to Baghdad to purchase supplies. Thus, it was often unclear just who was in charge of Camp Ashraf.

4. The coalition did not actively encourage MeK members to leave the camp. One of the purposes of consolidating the MeK at Camp Ashraf was to reduce the number of troops needed to control the detainee population. Another way of doing this would have been to reduce the size of that population. Given the MeK's cult-based control over its members, this would likely have been a difficult and frustrating process. However, at a minimum, the leaders should have been separated from the rank and file. Most JIATF officers believed that the rank and file would have requested repatriation had they simply been separated from the leadership. No effort was ever made to do this, even though the Third Geneva Convention provides that officers should be quartered separately from enlisted personnel. And although the JIATF built



facility to house individuals who left Camp Ashraf, it did not oppose the construction of physical barriers— e.g., guard posts, berms, concertina wire—that were used to keep MeK members from leaving the group.

5. The MeK has not been treated as a terrorist organization. Failure to assert control over the MeK and its facility has exposed the coalition, and particularly the United States, to criticism that the group is being treated as an ally for intelligencegathering purposes rather than as an FTO. This has exposed the United States to accusations of hypocrisy in its worldwide effort to counter violent extremism, and there have been no attempts to counter this destructive misperception through broad-based communication efforts aimed at policymakers and the public.

#### Recommendations for the Future

This research suggests that an opportunity exists for the Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I)—particularly the detainee operations command and the JIATF—or other U.S. officials to influence how the GOI treats the MeK. The GOI should be encouraged to repatriate the MeK to Iran by a process that respects the principle of nonrefoulement, preferably facilitated by the ICRC. Forcible repatriation is allowed, but only after each member's case is considered individually, and only if there are no substantial grounds for believing that he or she will be subjected to persecution or torture. To date, there is no evidence that any MeK members who were repatriated to Iran through the ICRC have been persecuted or tortured. JIATF personnel and former MeK members believe that many members of the MeK rank and file would volunteer for repatriation if they were freed of the MeK leadership's authoritarian, cultic practices.

For the longer term, we offer six additional recommendations. Defense planners should act in coordination with DoD, DOS, and the White House to formulate specific objectives and a clear mission statement for field commanders regarding the treatment of special populations, particularly in circumstances that are politically sensitive.

Prior to the commencement of military action, field commanders and their delegated officers and enlisted staff should be provided with information about the history, goals, and relevant cultural differences of these special populations. Particular attention should be given to their sociological makeup and the ability of their leadership to physically or mentally harm their followers.

Commanders in charge of detainee operations should establish stricter oversight of all types of detention environments and all procedures that govern day-to-day



activities within them. Although consolidation in an assigned residence may require less manpower than would be the case in an internment facility, FTOs and cultic groups should be dispersed rather than allowed to concentrate their numbers, control their home facilities, and secure power over their rank and file. During a military conflict, the offices of the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State, along with commanders in the field, should work together to develop a plan for communicating with the public (in the United States, in theater, and worldwide) about politically sensitive issues regarding special populations. Commanders of detainee operations would benefit if international humanitarian law treaty instruments provided a clearer legal framework to govern the detention of designated terrorists, nonstate actors, and unusual militias in both international and noninternational conflicts. Until such changes are made, U.S. commanders of detainee operations should collaborate with DoD and DOS to secure a legal finding regarding the rules governing detention that apply under both treaty-based and customary international humanitarian law.

#### Abbreviations

ARC	Ashraf Refugee Camp
CJTF 7	Combined Joint Task Force 7
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
DOS	U.S. Department of State
EPW	enemy prisoner of war
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FOB	forward operating base
FTO	foreign terrorist organization
GOI	government of Iraq
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IED	improvised explosive device



IIG	interim Iraqi government
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
IRI	Islamic Republic of Iran
IRP	Islamic Republican Party
JIATF	joint interagency task force-Ashraf
MeK	Mujahedin-e Khalq
MKO	Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization
MNF-I	Multi-National Force-Iraq
MP	military police
NCRI	National Council of Resistance of Iran
NLA	National Liberation Army
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
PMOI	People's Mujahedin of Iran
POW	prisoner of war
TF-134	Task Force 134 (Detainee Operations)
TIPF	temporary internment and protection facility
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USCENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

## Chapter One

### The Mujahedin-e Khalq: A U.S. Policy Conundrum

During the six years that coalition forces have occupied Iraq, and particularly since the Abu Ghraib scandal, detainee operations have become an increasingly prominent and contentious focal point of U.S. military activity. The number of U.S.-held detainees peaked at around 26,000 in the fall of 2007 and, as of January 2009,



remained at around 15,000. In addition to these detainees, coalition forces have detained approximately 3,500 members of the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MeK) in a form of assigned residence. The MeK is a cultic group of Iranian dissidents that for more than four decades has advocated the overthrow of the government of Iran and that the U.S. Secretary of State designated a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) in 1997. How did the U.S. military find itself in the position of securing and protecting members of a group that its own government had labeled as terrorists? What complications have resulted from this arrangement? How can the situation be resolved now that coalition forces have transferred responsibility for the MeK to the government of Iraq (GOI) following the enactment of the status of forces agreement between Iraq and the United States? How can a similar situation be avoided in the future? In broad terms, this monograph seeks to address these questions.

### Who Are the MeK?

The MeK was founded in 1965 by a group of Tehran University students whose radical ideas centered on armed revolt against Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, whom they regarded as a U.S. puppet responsible for the growth of Western influences in Iran. Their embrace of both Marxist philosophy and Islamic values formed the core of their belief in revolutionary struggle expressed in violent action, which is reflected in the name they chose: Mujahedin-e Khalq, “the People’s Holy Warriors.”

In 1971, the MeK’s first planned terrorist attack, which targeted electric power grids in Tehran, was thwarted by the Shah’s secret police, which had infiltrated the organization. Many members of the MeK were killed, and its three founding members were executed. Despite this failed attempt and the general crackdown that followed, throughout the 1970s, the MeK carried out a series of attacks against the Iranian government and Western targets, including the assassination of three U.S. Army officers and three U.S. civilian contactors in Tehran.

In 1979, the new MeK leader, Masoud Rajavi, aligned the group with Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini. Rajavi shifted his allegiance to Iran’s first elected president, Abol- Hassan Banisadr, and against Khomeini’s Islamic Republican Party (IRP). After Khomeini forced Banisadr out of office in 1981, the MeK launched violent attacks against IRP targets, the largest of which—the bombing of the IRP’s Tehran headquarters—killed more than 70 members of the leadership. Rajavi and Banisadr escaped to Paris, where they formed the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), an umbrella



organization of Iranian dissident groups opposed to Khomeini. Some of the MeK rank and file either followed the leadership to Europe or moved into Iranian Kurdistan. Others crossed the border into Iraq, where they established a series of communes. Those remaining in Iran formed an underground network that continued to plan and conduct attacks aimed at destabilizing the Khomeini regime.

After invading Iran in 1980, Saddam Hussein began funding the MeK to extend the reach of the NCRI's European publicity campaign opposing the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) and to secure any intelligence that the MeK collected regarding Iran. In 1986, the MeK leadership accepted an invitation from Saddam to relocate to Iraq to join forces with Saddam's military and fight against the IRI. Saddam provided the MeK with protection, funding, weapons, ammunition, vehicles, tanks, military training, and the use (but not ownership) of land.

With these resources, the MeK established several compounds in Iraq and encouraged its members and supporters in Iran and elsewhere to relocate there. Approximately 7,000 members, accounting for approximately 80 percent of the exiled MeK population, went to these camps. Rajavi made them soldiers in his new National Liberation Army (NLA). In exchange for Saddam's support, the MeK provided him with intelligence on the IRI, interrogation and translation services, and direct military assistance. The MeK launched numerous raids across the border into Iran, clashing with Iranian military forces and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), sometimes with the assistance of the Iraqi military. More than a quarter of the MeK's members in Iraq were killed in these unsuccessful raids.

The MeK's service to Saddam continued after the Iran-Iraq War ended in 1988. The MeK is widely believed to have assisted Saddam in the suppression of the Shia and Kurdish uprisings in Iraq in the aftermath of the Gulf War of 1991. The MeK also conducted security operations in the regions around its camps for years.

Prior to its exile, the MeK was the most popular dissident group in Iran. It lost much of its popularity due to its willingness to fight with Saddam—the instigator of the destructive Iran-Iraq War—and to kill Iranian conscripts. It also lost much of its popularity due to Masoud Rajavi's transformation of the MeK from an activist dissident group into an inward-looking cult. Rajavi instituted what he termed an "ideological revolution" in 1985, which, over time, imbued the MeK with many of the typical characteristics of a cult, such as authoritarian control, confiscation of assets, sexual control (including



mandatory divorce and celibacy), emotional isolation, forced labor, sleep deprivation, physical abuse, and limited exit options.

### The MeK During Operation Iraqi Freedom

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) war planners designated the MeK as a hostile military target, in large part because the United States viewed the group as an unofficial subsidiary of Saddam's military. Planners did not, however, provide field commanders with guidance about what to do following combat with the MeK. After brief combat (which the MeK denies ever occurred), special forces officers signed a cease-fire agreement with the MeK in April 2003. Lacking any briefings regarding the MeK's cult practices and past criminal activities, the officers were persuaded by the MeK leadership's false claims (presented in fluent English) that the MeK had offered to fight on behalf of the coalition, and they allowed the MeK to retain their weapons. Washington agencies agreed that the MeK should be disarmed and compelled to surrender, but the coalition officers who negotiated with the group in May 2003 were again dissuaded from carrying out this instruction. The new agreement did disarm the MeK, and it consolidated the MeK's membership at the group's largest compound, Camp Ashraf, which is about 40 miles north of Baghdad. However, coalition forces accepted a cease-fire rather than the MeK's surrender.

Using buildings constructed by the MeK about 500 yards from Camp Ashraf, the coalition established a primitive forward operating base (FOB) to house personnel who supervised the MeK as well as coalition soldiers who provided security in the area. Many MeK members requested coalition assistance to leave the group, and the coalition constructed a temporary internment and protection facility (TIPF) adjacent to the coalition base to house them.

Because international humanitarian law governing detention varies according to the detainees' legal classification—as, for example, combatants or civilians (or “unlawful” or “illegal” combatants, under the George W. Bush administration's controversial exceptions)—a first task for the coalition was to classify the MeK. According to the terms of the Third Geneva Convention and U.S. military law, coalition forces treated the MeK as enemy prisoners of war (EPWs) on an interim basis until each member's status could be determined by a competent tribunal. However, no tribunal decision was made. Instead, in June 2004, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld designated the MeK as protected persons (e.g., civilians) under the Fourth Geneva Conven-



tion. After this contentious designation, coalition forces maintained security at Camp Ashraf until authority was transferred to the GOI in accordance with the status of forces agreement that took effect on January 1, 2009.

### The Complicated Situation at Camp Ashraf

This arrangement has provoked considerable controversy, and many observers have questioned why members of a terrorist organization that the U.S. military initially identified as a hostile target were later designated protected persons whose security was the responsibility of coalition forces. In response to this complex and seemingly contradictory situation, in 2007, Major General Douglas M. Stone, U.S. Marine Corps, then the commander of Task Force 134 (Detainee Operations) (TF-134) and deputy commander of Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I), asked RAND to conduct a rigorous analysis of the circumstances leading to the MeK's continued residence under MNF-I protection at Camp Ashraf. He asked that the study focus on the following issues:

The responsibility imposed on TF-134 to contain and protect the MeK diluted the scarce financial and personnel resources available to support detainee operations in Iraq and resulted in casualties to U.S. troops. Might the detention of this group have been handled in a way that would have reduced these costs and produced a more desirable outcome from the U.S. perspective?

The GOI wants the MeK out of the country in the near term. Given the constraints of relocating individuals who might face persecution in their home country, how can this best be accomplished?

Although the MeK problem seems unique, could a similar situation present itself in future counterinsurgency operations? If so, what could be done to avoid the complications that occurred in this case?

### Research Questions

As background for the study, we conducted a thorough analysis of the MeK's formation and internal organizational structure, the activities that resulted in its designation as an FTO, its alliance with Saddam, its consolidation at Camp Ashraf in 2003, its members' designation as protected persons in 2004, the specific obligations that this designation imposed on MNF-I and particularly on TF-134, and efforts to resettle its members.



From this foundation, we developed six research questions that subsequently guided the study:

Was the MeK taken into custody under the appropriate terms?

What are the requirements of international humanitarian law, and particularly the Geneva Conventions, with respect to detainees? Have those requirements been observed in this case?

What have been the effects of the protected-persons designation?

Was the decision to consolidate the MeK at a single site a good one? Has the coalition's supervision of Camp Ashraf been effective?

What are the options for releasing or relocating members of the MeK? What complications, if any, may affect the release/relocation process?

What overarching lessons have been learned from the MeK experience that will be useful to future commanders of detainee operations, to combatant commanders, and to military planners?

## Research Approach

This monograph presents the results of RAND's detailed analysis based on research conducted between October 2007 and December 2008. In addition to an extensive examination of primary and secondary source documents, we interviewed dozens of military and civilian officials in the United States and Iraq, including current and former members of the joint interagency task force (JIATF) responsible for the MeK, the commander of FOB Grizzly, U.S. military detainee operations officers, and officials at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, the U.S. Department of State (DOS), U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and National Security Council. These discussions were conducted primarily on a nonattribution basis. Therefore, in most cases, specific names are not cited in the text.

Former members of the MeK at the ARC approached RAND researchers to share their stories. All residents of the ARC were voluntary internees; they had not been detained by coalition forces as security threats. RAND researchers interviewed Alireza Jafarzeh, who directed the MeK's U.S. lobbying apparatus, the National Council of Resistance, until it was designated an FTO. We also visited Camp Ashraf, where we were given in-depth tours by MeK leaders and were allowed to observe



meetings between MeK leaders and JIATF and TF-134 officers.

## Organization of This Monograph

This monograph focuses on the MeK with an emphasis on its detainment following the OIF invasion in March 2003 and the complications that resulted, particularly with respect to the MeK's legal status as protected persons. Chapter Two describes the decision to designate the MeK a hostile target, the cease-fire agreements, and the MeK's consolidation at Camp Ashraf. It also addresses how the MeK's legal status was determined. Chapter Three discusses options for relocating the MeK members who are still detained in Iraq. Chapter Four describes the special challenges involved in detaining the MeK and the major lessons learned from that experience. It also offers recommendations for relocating the MeK and for addressing the types of issues that are relevant not only to the MeK situation but to detainee operations in general.

Appendix A provides greater detail about the MeK's history and major activities. Appendix B documents its cult behavior. Appendix C presents a timeline illustrating organizational milestones in the MeK's history as well as its major terrorist activities. Appendix D discusses what is meant by foreign terrorist organization and the ramifications of a group's designation as such.

## Chapter Two

### The MeK During Operation Iraqi Freedom

Aware of the MeK's presence in Iraq, OIF planners had to determine whether it posed a threat to coalition forces. After some debate among U.S. military and civilian officials regarding its status, the MeK was listed as a hostile target. This decision was based primarily on the MeK's past history of working with Saddam's military, including its alleged participation in the suppression of the Shia and Kurdish uprisings of 1991, as well as the many violent attacks that it had conducted against Iranian targets in recent years.

Further, the MeK had a substantial armory, thanks to its long relationship with Saddam. Near MeK camps, there were dozens of bunkers belonging to both the MeK and the Iraqi military. These bunkers were generously stocked with weaponry, including artillery, tanks, aircraft, rocket launchers, infantry weapons, shells, rockets, land mines, and bullets. Whatever the MeK's military intentions against coalition forces might have been, it was imperative for the coalition to secure these armaments



and munitions. Moreover, the group was a wild card that could have created security concerns vis-à-vis the IRI as well as the Shia and Kurd communities.

Finally, during negotiations between the United States and the IRI in January 2003, the United States agreed to bomb MeK bases in return for Iranian support for subsequent reconstruction efforts and cooperation in rescuing downed pilots.

#### A MeK Cease-Fire but Not a Surrender

For its part, the MeK insisted that it dispatched a letter to DOS in February 2003 declaring its intention to be a neutral party during the impending invasion of Iraq and stating that it would not fire on coalition forces, even in self-defense. It also claimed to have offered to fight on behalf of the coalition. No interviewees were aware of such a letter or offer. Irrespective of the accuracy of either of these claims, such a letter was not discussed, or at least was not persuasive, in OIF planning.

Despite the MeK's statements to the contrary, both the official U.S. Army Special Forces history and the official U.S. Army history of OIF indicate that the MeK engaged coalition forces in battle, presenting a "formidable threat" and demonstrating "excellent fighting qualities." Nevertheless, on April 13, 2003, in the face of collapsing Iraqi forces, the MeK requested peace. U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) ordered the special operations unit that had received the request to demand that the MeK capitulate and be disarmed. However, the subsequent encounter between the special operations negotiating team and the MeK took a different turn. The MeK sent leaders who were fluent in English and who took pains to establish ties with the United States by claiming—falsely, as it turned out—that a large portion of the group had advanced degrees from American universities and family members residing in the United States. The MeK again insisted that it had not fired on coalition forces (despite at least one documented special forces casualty from MeK fire) and that it had offered to fight on the coalition's behalf. The MeK also indicated a willingness to provide intelligence on Iran and to help secure the border with Iran. Impressed by the MeK's description of itself and its apparent willingness to be of service to the coalition, on April 15, 2003, special operations officers agreed to a cease-fire rather than to the surrender ordered by USCENTCOM.

The April 15 "Local Ceasefire Agreement of Mutual Understanding and Co-Ordination" was simply a truce. Like any truce, it provided the "suspension of military operations to the extent agreed upon by the parties." In this case, the agreement stipulated that



either side could recommence hostilities after giving 48-hours' notice. It also allowed the MeK to retain its weapons and confined its members to five of its camps.

Given the coalition's scarce manpower and the special forces' need for mobility, the cease-fire agreement seemed to offer an appealing alternative to surrender, which would have burdened the capturing forces with legal and logistical obligations to protect and possibly also to feed and house the captives as POWs according to the Geneva Convention III Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. However, it has been noted that the special forces commander had no authority to enter into this type of agreement—i.e., one that allowed a designated FTO to keep its weapons—and this decision later created a substantial political and operational problem for the United States.

#### Consolidation of the MeK at Camp Ashraf

Washington agencies agreed that the MeK should be disarmed and compelled to surrender, though they did not direct that the MeK be dismantled. According to press reports, USCENTCOM directed that "MEK forces will be destroyed or compelled to surrender, leading to disarmament and detention." In an attempt to carry out the order, coalition officers endured a two-day negotiation with the MeK in early May. Again, the MeK presented itself sympathetically and negotiated tenaciously, succeeding in dissuading the coalition from forcing its surrender. Instead, the new agreement of May 10—which supplanted the April 15 agreement—allowed the MeK to continue to claim neutrality and to accept a lasting cease-fire. The principal differences between this agreement and the April 15 cease-fire agreement were the disarmament of MeK forces and the consolidation of all MeK personnel in Iraq at a single facility, Camp Ashraf in Diyala Province. The agreement also required each member of the MeK to sign a document renouncing terrorism and the use of violence. In announcing the terms of the agreement, Major General Raymond Odierno commended the MeK's cooperation, and he recommended that the group's FTO status be reviewed.

#### First Tasks at Camp Ashraf

Numbering more than 3,800 members, the MeK was, at the time, the largest body of detainees under coalition control. The 530th Military Police (MP) Battalion was assigned to oversee implementation of the May agreement that, in addition to requiring disarmament and consolidation, protected the MeK from possible violence from Iraqis. Using MeK buildings approximately 500 yards from Camp Ashraf, the



battalion established an FOB that would house additional coalition units that provided security in the region. In light of Abu Ghraib, it was unfortunate that one of the few MP units in Iraq that had experience with the internment of POWs and civilians was assigned to manage the assigned residence of the MeK rather than a theater internment facility. The 530th would remain there for a year.

### Determining the MeK's Legal Status

In the course of implementing the agreement, important questions emerged. First, what was the MeK's legal status according to international humanitarian law as interpreted during the war on terrorism? Legal status was important because it would determine the specific obligations of coalition forces to its MeK detainees. Because the MeK was a belligerent that operated with Iraqi forces but was also a nonstate actor and a designated FTO, staff lawyers for Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7) were not sure whether the Geneva Conventions should apply to its members or if they should be considered "unlawful" or "illegal" combatants. According to the Third Geneva Convention, during a war between states, members of irregular forces that fight on the side of enemy forces and are captured on the battlefield are usually categorized as combatants.

However, if there is doubt as to whether such a classification is appropriate, "such persons shall enjoy the protection of the present Convention until such time as their status has been determined by a competent tribunal." The convention's drafters saw designation by a competent tribunal as important because combatants are immune from prosecution for acts of war that would be crimes if committed by civilians, though combatants are not immune to prosecution for war crimes. In the context of the war on terrorism, such "Article 5" tribunals were particularly necessary because "illegal" or "unlawful" combatants were not given the full range of protections that the Geneva Conventions require for captured combatants or civilians.

While the question of the MeK's legal status was under consideration, coalition forces gave MeK members the interim status of "other detainees," who are required by the Third Geneva Convention to receive the same treatment as EPWs while their status is under review. The MeK Review Board was formed and appeared to track U.S. Army regulations implementing Article 5's "competent tribunal" requirement insofar as it was a military review panel "composed of three commissioned officers, one of whom must be of a field grade." However, it seems that the board was not tasked with



determining each MeK member's legal status but rather with classifying members of the MeK into one of the following four categories:

detain—potential prosecution

detain—security threat/risk

detain—potential intelligence value

release-eligible.

The legal status decision remained with DoD. According to an officer involved in the process, the purpose of this determination was to eliminate the MeK organization in Iraq. It is not evident how placing MeK members into one of these categories would achieve this goal, particularly since no action was taken to break up the MeK organization.

To determine whether each MeK member should be detained or classified as eligible for release, coalition forces had to obtain answers to several questions:

Did they present a serious, current risk of violence or destabilization?

Had members of the MeK committed belligerent acts against coalition forces?

Had they committed terrorist acts in the past? Were they still committing terrorist acts?

Could any of them be prosecuted for crimes or used in prosecutions under U.S. law, particularly for the murders of Americans in Tehran?

Were rumors that the MeK was storing Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD) accurate?

What intelligence could be gained from them about the IRI or Iraq?

What were the identities of all individual MeK members? What was their citizenship? Where did they have rights of residence?

To answer these questions, CJTF-7 formed JIATF-Ashraf. The JIATF included representatives from the U.S. military and several civilian departments and would report directly to CJTF-7 on the Camp Ashraf investigation. Military and foreign intelligence questions were handled by DoD intelligence officers and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) personnel. The FBI and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) handled



law enforcement and domestic intelligence, interviewed targeted individuals, and conducted a census of each MeK member at Camp Ashraf. U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agencies addressed citizenship and immigration issues for members with ties to the United States. DOS conducted background interviews with each MeK member at Camp Ashraf and facilitated communication with the embassies of third countries where former MeK members claimed citizenship, residence rights, or family links. All of these agencies, except DHS, were invited to contribute nonvoting advisers to the MeK Review Board. In total, approximately 70 affiliated staff participated in these activities.

The MeK Review Board did not decide the legal status of MeK members, but it did classify them into the four categories listed earlier. The board determined that very few should be detained. For instance, a small number were detained for potential prosecution. Although some officials have thought that the MeK might potentially provide useful intelligence information regarding Iran, no members of the group were detained on the basis of their having intelligence value. Nearly all were classified “release-eligible.” In other words, the board determined that, whatever their legal status, nearly no MeK members presented a threat sufficient to justify detention. Ironically, so long as the May 10, 2003, consolidation agreement remained in force, the MeK would remain at Camp Ashraf, meaning that “release” would have the same practical effect as assigned residence, which is a form of detention.

No decision had been made regarding the disposition of the MeK after battle or the then-anticipated rapid withdrawal of coalition forces from Iraq, except that they would not be sent to Iran for fear that they might be persecuted and that repatriating them would be a “gift” to the IRI. In those early days, the only mission guidance that JIATF officials received was to gather information on each MeK member. There had been no strategic planning in terms of how to handle the group after combat ceased. Both the National Security Council and the field command staff, which faced staffing shortages, analyzed the problem; finding no solution (but refusing to consider repatriation to Iran), they opted for the status quo of holding the MeK at Camp Ashraf, providing security, maintaining calm, and doing nothing to break up the group.

The Iraqi Governing Council’s Resolution to Expel the MeK from Iraq

On December 9, 2003, the Iraqi Governing Council complicated the MeK issue by passing a unanimous resolution calling for the expulsion of the MeK from Iraq within



six months. The resolution did not identify a destination. Indeed, a member of the Iraqi National Congress declared, "We don't care where they're going to go." However, the growing links between Iraqi Shia parties and the IRI created the suspicion that the interim Iraqi government (IIG) would deport the MeK to Iran when it assumed power at the end of June 2004.

The CPA's administrator, Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, proposed resettling MeK members in third countries. However, as he and JIATF officials would later learn, no country would accept anyone from the group who did not already have valid rights of residence there. Refugee status was suggested, but the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) would not consider such applications from current or former MeK members because their legal status had not yet been formally resolved.

#### The MeK as Protected Persons

As the official special forces history of OIF notes, when "legal issues relating to the status of enemy POWs and the application of the laws of armed conflict in relation to non-state terrorists required clarification . . . these questions [often] found their way back to the Department of Defense for resolution." The MeK issue was one such example. But as the June 2004 transfer of power from the CPA to the IIG approached, no status decisions had been made. U.S. and coalition officials feared that the IIG would forcibly deport the MeK to Iran and that such an effort would lead to violence at Camp Ashraf.

The UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were willing to offer their assistance in helping to move MeK members out of Iraq, but they were unwilling to start work until the MeK's legal status was resolved. In addition, the United Nations Security Council declared that the coalition's occupation of Iraq would terminate as a matter of law upon the transfer of power at the end of June, which would have the effect of ending the application of most provisions of the Geneva Conventions. Given this time pressure, on June 25, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld designated the MeK as civilians protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention, which protects civilians in times of war. His memorandum noted that the decision was intended to facilitate collaboration with the UNHCR and the ICRC.

From the beginning, the designation was problematic from both legal and policy perspectives. Legally, if it is indeed true that the MeK engaged coalition forces in combat,



the MeK's members would likely have qualified for combatant status as members of a militia or volunteer corps forming part of the Iraqi armed forces and, having been captured, would therefore have been EPWs. "Should any doubt arise" as to whether MeK members qualified for combatant status, the Third Geneva Convention requires that each individual's status be determined by a competent tribunal. Although no prosecutions have been brought against them, the decision—without tribunal review—stripped the MeK of immunity from prosecution for legal acts of war.

However, the Bush administration's policy was that foreign terrorists who were in Iraq illegally were not protected by the Geneva Conventions. Instead, they were to be detained according to the administration's controversial "unlawful" or "illegal" combatant policy. In the case of the MeK, this would have been an awkward approach because the United States had declared it to be a subsidiary of Saddam Hussein's military during OIF and had applied the conventions to MeK members on an interim basis. In addition, to the extent that coalition forces might decide to detain MeK members as "unlawful" or "illegal" combatants, President Bush's military order of November 13, 2001, would limit the coalition's flexibility because it authorized detainment only for specific individuals who "engaged in, aided or abetted, or conspired to commit" terrorist acts "that have caused, threaten to cause, or aim to cause, injury to or adverse effects on the United States, its citizens, national security, foreign policy, or economy."

The ICRC, the UNHCR, and DOS all urged DoD not to make a legal designation without tribunal review. They noted that, procedurally, each MeK member was due Article 5 tribunal review. They also noted that civilian status would have been legally correct only for individual MeK members whom the tribunal decided had remained neutral, committed no belligerent acts, and had not carried arms openly against the coalition. Despite text in Secretary Rumsfeld's memorandum specifically limiting protected-persons status to members of the MeK who qualified under Article 4 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the memorandum did not require the MeK Review Board to make these decisions on an individual basis, and there was no subsequent action to determine any individual MeK member's status.

In addition, the ICRC noted that, due to UNSCR 1546, the conflict in Iraq would no longer be a war between states; hence, the Geneva Conventions would no longer apply (except for Article 3, common to all four conventions). It argued that Common Article 3 and customary international humanitarian law govern noninternational



conflicts; hence, continuing to apply the Geneva Conventions to the MeK would be legally incorrect. However, because the Bush administration was wary of customary law because it is not treaty-based, the UN Security Council's grant of authority to MNF-I to detain individuals—if necessary for imperative reasons of security—was modeled on the Fourth Convention's rules for interning civilians during an occupation.

According to our discussions with TF-134 and DOS staff attorneys, it appears that the civilian status determination was made to protect the MeK from deportation to Iran and to relieve coalition forces of the responsibilities incurred in detaining EPWs. With regard to deportation, the status determination did not matter. Although the Third Geneva Convention requires that POWs be "released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities" (Article 118), its official commentary notes that POWs are protected from forced transfer to a country where "the dangers involved for the person concerned seems [sic] manifestly unjust and grave."<sup>46</sup> The Fourth Convention provides similar protections, forbidding forcible transfer of any individual "to a country where he or she may have reason to fear persecution for his or her political or religious beliefs," and each individual continues to be protected by the convention until such time as his or her disposition is finalized (Articles 6 and 45).

In terms of detention, the impact of the legal status determination on the MeK's particular circumstances was unclear because it is not evident that MNF-I determined whether it was still detaining them after the MeK Review Board classified nearly all residents of Camp Ashraf as release-eligible. As discussed in Chapter Four, MNF-I has never taken control of Camp Ashraf. The May 10, 2003, cease-fire agreement consolidated MeK members at Camp Ashraf, which was a form of assigned residence, albeit one agreed to by the group's leaders. The Third Convention allows internment or lesser forms of detention for POWs during wartime. The Fourth Convention, on the other hand, allows assigned residence or internment of civilians in occupied areas only as an exceptional measure performed on a case-by-case basis when an individual presents an acute security threat that can be mitigated only by placing that person in internment or assigned residence: The decision to detain shall be made "according to a regular procedure," be subject to appeal, and reviewed periodically, "if possible every six months." The rules for detainment after the transfer of power paralleled the Fourth Convention's rules. Despite these rules, MeK members have been kept in what is essentially an assigned residence after the MeK Review Board found almost all of them to be release-eligible rather than security threats. No coalition body ever



revisited the question of whether security reasons mandated continued assigned residence for MeK members.

Secretary Rumsfeld's decision has had long-term policy costs. First, it shifted responsibility for the MeK squarely to DoD rather than allowing it to remain a shared obligation among the DoD, DOS, ICRC, and UNHCR. Second, because the decision came from the U.S. Secretary of Defense rather than from the MeK Review Board, it was widely viewed as an expression of support for the MeK, particularly since the term protected persons is widely misconstrued to denote an exceptional, special status. The MeK falsely promoted—and may have falsely interpreted—the decision as support for its assertion that the group was innocent of, or immune to, all accusations of terrorism or violence. The coalition never invested public-relations energy into overcoming this impression. Combined with the coalition's failure to treat the MeK as a terrorist organization at Camp Ashraf, this action exposed the United States to accusations of hypocrisy in its fight against terrorism.

## Chapter Three

### Options for Relocating the MeK

Both Iraq and the United States have publicly stated that their goal is to remove the MeK from Iraq. According to the Geneva Conventions, when detainees are released, they may be

reestablished in their country of residence prior to detention

resettled or "accommodated" in third or neutral countries

repatriated to the country of their nationality.

The most common dispositions are reestablishment or repatriation. However, in some cases, neither option may be possible because a detainee has a well-founded fear, or would face a real risk, of persecution or threats to personal security—including torture or loss of life—as a result of his or her race, religion, nationality, political opinions, or membership in a particular social group. In international humanitarian law, human rights law, and refugee law, forced deportation of individuals facing persecution is forbidden under the principle known as nonrefoulement (derived from the French verb *refouler*, which means "to drive back").<sup>72</sup> Although the Geneva Conventions mandate prompt release of detainees at the end of an occupation, for detainees whose situation triggers nonrefoulement protections because of their political or religious beliefs, the



conventions allow continuing detention and Geneva Convention protections (including regular review of the necessity of detention) until a satisfactory disposition is arranged. In the case of the MeK, however, there has been no agreement on how to answer the fundamental question: Where can they go?

#### Option 1: Reestablishing the MeK in Iraq

Because the MeK members now at Camp Ashraf were living in Iraq when coalition forces invaded the country in 2003, the first option— reestablishing them in their country of residence—means allowing them to remain in Iraq. However, this has not been considered feasible for several reasons. First, when Saddam invited the MeK to Iraq, he did not grant its members legal residency, nor did they seek to become legal residents or citizens, though the MeK now asserts that it is legally present in Iraq. The GOI has indicated that it has no intention of legalizing the members' status. Second, U.S. officials fear that the MeK faces persecution from Iraqis or physical danger from Iranian agents.

A large segment of the Iraqi population regards the MeK with antipathy because of widely held perceptions that the group acted as Saddam's "private army," working on his behalf to help suppress the Shia and Kurdish uprisings after the first Gulf War and to provide security in the areas around the MeK camps. Third, in a December 2003 resolution, the Iraqi Governing Council explicitly called for the ejection of the MeK, and Iraqi officials continue to take that position. Nevertheless, despite ongoing vows to deport the MeK and shut down the camp when the 2009 transfer of power took place, in December 2008, the GOI provided written assurances to Washington that, when Iraqi security forces took responsibility for Camp Ashraf, the MeK would be treated humanely and that MeK members would not be forcibly transferred to a country where they might face persecution. The guarantee will allow Washington to work with Baghdad and with such organizations as the ICRC "to find a humanitarian solution for the camp occupants." In conjunction with these efforts, the JIATF will oversee the transition and provide guidance to Iraqi security forces.

#### Option 2: Resettling the MeK in Third Countries

Given the IRI's history of persecuting members of the MeK, the United States presumed that the principle of nonrefoulement prohibits repatriating the MeK to Iran. Therefore, resettlement in a third country was deemed to be the only viable option for the long term. So far, however, attempts to accomplish this goal have not been



successful.

### Resettling Current MeK Members

One of the obstacles to resettling the MeK is that its leadership has made clear that it wants the approximately 3,500 members to be moved either to a single country or to a small number of countries (preferably with strong social welfare systems) in order to protect the group's vitality. To help facilitate that outcome, during the first year of consolidation at Camp Ashraf, the MeK leadership asked the UNHCR to grant its members refugee status. But the question remains whether each MeK member could substantiate a well-founded fear of persecution from Iran, and the UN's 1951 Refugee Convention has exclusions that deny refugee status to persons who have committed crimes under international law, serious nonpolitical crimes, and acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Would-be refugees cannot commit or condone violence, and refugee status provides no immunity from prosecution for criminal or terrorist acts committed at any time. Despite the MeK's public renunciation of violence in 2001, its previous history of violence and the leadership's requests for the return of its weapons during OIF made it highly unlikely that the UNHCR would grant refugee status to the entire group.

Furthermore, even if refugee status were to be conferred, sovereign states are not required to grant asylum. Rather, they may take it into account as they consider individual requests. The UNHCR projects that the subset of registered refugees who will require resettlement in 2009 will number 565,000; only 70,000 places were made available for resettlement in 2008. Considering that the Iraq war displaced more than 4 million people and that only 3,183 Iraqis were resettled between 2003 and 2006, it became increasingly unlikely that any country would admit members of a designated FTO in preference to other refugees from Iraq. Ultimately, the MeK abandoned its efforts to achieve refugee status, but it still requests resettlement, to no avail.

### Resettling Former MeK Members

Among MeK members who had renounced the group and taken up residence in the coalition's temporary internment facility, approximately 200 hoped to be resettled in Europe rather than repatriated to Iran. The JIATF believed that these former members had a better chance of resettlement than current MeK members. In 2004, the JIATF helped facilitate applications to the UNHCR on behalf of those individuals. All but 11 of these former MeK members were granted refugee status in a highly expedited



process involving videoconferenced interviews. Still, no country would accept any current or former member of the MeK who did not already have valid rights of residence. The UNHCR indicated that a few countries might consider such action but only if the United States would accept a token number.

For its part, the United States is precluded from granting legal residence to any current or former MeK members because the Immigration and Nationality Act (as amended by the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996) bars admission of certain classes of aliens—i.e., individuals who are currently members of an FTO, who have engaged in or incited terrorist activity, or who have received “military-type” training “from or on behalf of” any FTO that was classified as such at the time the training was received. The MeK’s own propaganda indicated that nearly everyone at its camps was a member of the National Liberation Army and had received some type of weapons training. Moreover, MeK members would most certainly have received military training between 1997 and 2001, the year in which the group ceased to claim responsibility for attacks against Iranian targets. Unlike some other provisions of the act, the exclusion prohibiting military-type training could not be waived even if the Secretary of State were to remove the MeK from the FTO list. Therefore, if resettling any current or former MeK members in third countries were contingent upon the United States following suit, the option did not exist.

A short- to medium-term solution was crafted when TF-134 successfully negotiated with the Kurdistan Regional Government to take responsibility for refugees within its territory. In late 2008, the remaining former MeK members residing at the ARC (numbering fewer than 200, most of whom had refugee status) were moved into Kurdistan, where they had freedom of movement. Most of them reportedly used their freedom of movement to leave Iraq, and the ARC was closed in December 2008.

### Option 3: Repatriating the MeK to Iran

Because the majority of MeK members are Iranian nationals (though many are effectively stateless because they no longer have documentation or valid Iranian passports), the discussion of repatriation begins and ends with Iran. Aside from the general desirability of restoring individuals to their rightful homeland, the principal and most compelling reason to pursue repatriation to Iran is that, for more than five years, Iran has offered and honored a grant of amnesty to rank-and-file MeK members.

Amnesty was first suggested in early May 2003, when the IRI proposed, among other



things, to exchange Al Qaeda members detained in Iran, including Saif al-Adel and a son of Osama bin Laden, for the MeK in Iraq. To address U.S. concerns about the dangers of such an arrangement (i.e., that the human rights of former MeK members would be violated), Iran offered amnesty to all but 50 named leaders of the group. In addition, the IRI stated that it would invite the ICRC's facilitation of the MeK's repatriation as well as its oversight of trials of the MeK leadership. The United States initially refused the Iranian offer, not only out of distrust of the IRI's intentions and a desire to avoid encouraging the IRI to take hostages, but also because of an interest in preserving the MeK organization for its own possible future use—for example, providing coalition forces with intelligence on Iran—and to avoid giving Iran “a gift” (particularly if the IRI improved its human rights record by treating MeK members humanely). The United States also rejected a follow-up request to exchange the names of MeK detainees in Iraq and Al Qaeda detainees in Iran. General Odierno's May 10 cease-fire negotiations with the MeK occurred shortly after these negotiations.

In 2004, the U.S. approach changed to a limited extent. With Saddam's assistance, the MeK had increased its numbers by using the promise of repatriation to attract Iranian prisoners from the Iran-Iraq War out of Iraqi prison camps and into MeK camps. Many of the first individuals to ask the JIATF to help them leave the MeK were these former POWs, several hundred of whom were moved to the TIPF. They reported that the ICRC had visited MeK camps prior to OIF, but the MeK leadership had frustrated the ICRC's efforts to facilitate their repatriation and reestablish family links.

Early in 2004, the JIATF contacted the ICRC to follow up on the repatriation offer. However, the ICRC could not facilitate repatriation until coalition forces resolved the legal status of the MeK. After the group's members were designated as protected persons, the ICRC conducted individual interviews and coordinated repatriation to Iran in late 2004 and again in early 2005. By this means, approximately 250 former MeK members were voluntarily repatriated to Iran, where they were reportedly treated well by the IRI. Indeed, to gain public relations benefits, Iran hosted events to welcome the ex-MeK members home and then conducted individual two-week debriefings. To date, the ICRC is not aware of any ill treatment of these repatriates, even during the two-week debriefing period. In May 2004, the DOS group that conducted interviews at Camp Ashraf recommended repatriation for all MeK members, but no action was taken.

Repatriation to Iran has been the only successful long-term disposition option. Despite



the broad-based expectation that the IRI would persecute all former MeK members, that has not proven to be the case. Indeed, it has been in the IRI's interest to abide by its grant of amnesty in order to improve its international standing while at the same time pursuing its primary goal of dismantling the MeK. The GOI can also achieve its goal of ejecting the bulk of the MeK population while similarly improving its international standing by supporting repatriation through the ICRC. Several senior DOS officials continue to maintain that repatriation is the only plausible option.

It is essential that the ICRC be involved in any repatriation effort because the principle of nonrefoulement must be respected. This requires treating each member's case individually. The ICRC conducts interviews with individual candidates for repatriation to assess the nature of their fear of persecution. If an individual's fears are not objectively and subjectively sound, he or she can be forcibly repatriated. For those MeK members whose fears would indeed prohibit their repatriation, which would likely include the named leaders who are not protected by Iran's amnesty, nonrefoulement will bar their repatriation. These individuals are not immune from prosecution for illegal entry or other crimes committed in Iraq (or Iran, if Iraq asserts jurisdiction), but the GOI will have to abide by its written diplomatic assurances to treat these individuals humanely and according to international norms.

## Chapter Four

### Unexpected Challenges, Unintended Consequences, and Lessons Learned

In the big OIF picture, the MeK had a small role. Where detainee operations are concerned, however, it loomed much larger—not only in the early days of the conflict, when MeK members being held at Camp Ashraf comprised a large percentage of the detained population—but also after the group was granted protected-persons status and thus became a longer-term DoD responsibility. Clearly, the MeK has an unusual history, but its apparent uniqueness does not mean that the U.S. military will never encounter its like again. In the course of future combat operations—and particularly in counterinsurgency actions—other special populations will undoubtedly emerge. In such a context, the missteps made in the course of the MeK experience and the lessons learned from them can help improve the way in which the United States approaches and conducts future detainee operations. Both of these aspects are discussed in this chapter.

### OIF Planners Did Not Adequately Define a Military Mission Regarding the MeK



Because of its FTO status and its history of military service to Saddam, the MeK had been designated a hostile target prior to the OIF invasion. Beyond that, however, coalition forces were given no military objectives regarding the group except to secure its surrender, and that outcome was never achieved. Many strategic questions ought to have been addressed in advance: What did field-level officers need to know about the MeK's history? What action was to be taken after its capitulation? Under what terms were its members to be held? Where? For how long? What might be the terms of their release? What would be their destination? These were predictable and practical concerns, but there is no evidence that they were given serious consideration, and no guidance on these issues was provided to either the combatant commanders or the commanders of detainee operations. This may reflect larger planning failures in OIF. As a result, without a clear goal, the coalition's activities at Camp Ashraf began, and largely remained, ad hoc.

The only directions that the JIATF received related to tactical matters. Although DOS reported that U.S. policy was "to eliminate the MeK's . . . intent to engage in terrorist activity and to prevent its reconstitution as a terrorist organization," JIATF officers were initially given such routine assignments as disarming and consolidating the MeK, helping the FBI compile a biometric census of the MeK population and conduct intelligence interrogations, supporting DOS efforts to collect biographical information on the population, and carrying out the MeK Review Board process. Later on, JIATF leaders were required to simply maintain the status quo and preserve calm.

#### Coalition Forces Were Not Prepared to Deal with an Unfamiliar Culture or the MeK's Atypical Characteristics

By all accounts, no coalition forces officers on the ground in Iraq, including those responsible for detainee issues, received a briefing of any significance regarding the MeK prior to deployment or interacting with MeK members. The first officers to serve on the JIATF at Camp Ashraf had little or no lead time to prepare for their assignments to Camp Ashraf. Neither the officers nor the soldiers who supported them received information or training regarding the Iranian (Persian) and Iraqi (Arab) cultures. During the first year of the occupation, some even remained unaware that different languages are spoken in the two nations. In an environment in which the occupying force and the detainees likewise speak different languages, not to mention different dialects of the same language, interpreters can play a fundamental operations role in conducting negotiations, elevating cultural awareness, and (in this case) gaining better access to



and insight about the MeK. Yet in the early days of OIF, no interpreters were assigned specifically to the JIATF at Camp Ashraf.

Even when relevant cultural and operational knowledge was attained through hard-won daily experience in theater, there were limited opportunities to share it. MNF-I denied requests by outgoing JIATF commanders to allow several days of crossover time to mentor incoming commanders about their complex and frustrating new role. Some officers were given cursory briefings about the MeK; others received none. Therefore, the usual difficulties related to conveying institutional knowledge were compounded by the fact that there was virtually no overlap among the top leadership during changes of command.

As a result, the JIATF's commanders had few or no opportunities to discuss the difficulties inherent in dealing with the MeK, to share knowledge, or to compare strategies. This deficit had particularly profound consequences once it became apparent to JIATF officers through their early interrogations of MeK members that the organization was not just an FTO; it was also a cult.

#### The MeK as a Cult

From its earliest days, the MeK had had tight social bonds, but these began to be transformed into something more sinister during the mid-1980s after the group's leaders and many of its members had relocated to Paris. There, Masoud Rajavi began to undertake what he called an "ideological revolution," requiring a new regimen of activities—at first demanding increased study and devotion to the cause but soon expanding into near-religious devotion to the Rajavis (Masoud and his wife, Maryam), public self-deprecation sessions, mandatory divorce, celibacy, enforced separation from family and friends, and gender segregation.

Prior to establishing an alliance with Saddam, the MeK had been a popular organization. However, once it settled in Iraq and fought against Iranian forces in alliance with Saddam, the group incurred the ire of the Iranian people and, as a result, faced a shortfall in volunteers. Thus began a campaign of disingenuous recruiting. The MeK naturally sought out Iranian dissidents, but it also approached Iranian economic migrants in such countries as Turkey and the United Arab Emirates with false promises of employment, land, aid in applying for asylum in Western countries, and even marriage, to attract them to Iraq. Relatives of members were given free trips to visit the MeK's camps. Most of these "recruits" were brought into Iraq illegally and then required to hand over their



identity documents for “safekeeping.” Thus, they were effectively trapped.

Another recruiting tactic was arranged with the assistance of Saddam’s government. Iranian prisoners from the Iran-Iraq War were offered the choice of going to MeK camps and being repatriated or remaining in Iraqi prison camps. Hundreds of prisoners went to MeK camps, where they languished. No repatriation efforts were made.

For coalition forces, the MeK’s cult behavior and questionable recruiting practices are significant insofar as they affect both the daily operations at the camp and the strategic disposition options available to the group. The leadership is unlikely to cooperate with policies that would undermine its ability to exert direct control over its members. Indeed, Human Rights Watch reports that the MeK long ago instituted a complicated process to retain members who expressed a desire to leave, which included a “trial,” forced confessions of disloyalty, and even torture. Although this process has been modified since the group was consolidated at Camp Ashraf, would-be walkaways are still “debriefed” for days or even weeks while held in some form of solitary confinement, during which they are encouraged to change their minds. Conversely, the long-term indoctrination and isolation experienced by MeK members are likely to have instilled an exaggerated sense of loyalty, causing them to reject offers to separate themselves from their leaders. This would apply in particular to repatriation to Iran, where the expectation of persecution has been dramatically instilled in their minds.

### The MeK as Skilled Manipulators of Public Opinion

During the more than four decades since its founding, the MeK has become increasingly adept at crafting and promoting its image as a democratic organization that seeks to bring down Iranian regimes, both secular and religious. This profile has been especially effective in the United States and Europe, where, until recently, the MeK’s extensive fundraising activities have been very successful. But despite the MeK’s ongoing attempts to build political support from the West through a multifaceted public-relations campaign, it was not enough to prevent the group from being designated an FTO by the United States as well as by the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and the European Union. According to U.S. law, providing any type of support—political, financial, or otherwise—for an FTO is a federal crime. Moreover, many of the MeK’s fundraising activities have been proven to be fraudulent (for example, claiming to be soliciting funds on behalf of Iranian refugees, child welfare, or medical services for children). The MeK has also been linked with a range of money-laundering activities.



If coalition forces, and particularly those involved in any type of negotiations with the MeK, had been apprised of the group's long history of deception, they would have been far less likely to have made the kinds of concessions that proved so troublesome later on. However, they found MeK representatives to be friendly, appealing, and knowledgeable about the United States. Thus, they were susceptible to the MeK's assertions of neutrality; its apparent willingness to help further coalition goals; its professions of support for democratic ideals, both within and outside its own organization; and its insistence that it had broad political support in the international community. Had the U.S. military, in particular, been more wary, it is unlikely that the MeK would have been able to avoid the surrender demanded by USCENTCOM, and even less probable that it could have elicited a request for review of its FTO status from General Odierno.

### The MeK Has Not Been Treated as a Terrorist Organization

Throughout OIF up to the present day, the MeK has remained on the U.S. list of FTOs. Yet several military and civilian leaders have made controversial public statements of support for the MeK, and, as discussed later in this chapter, coalition forces consistently failed to assert control over or dismantle the group. These statements and failures have exposed the coalition, and particularly the United States, to criticism that it is treating the group as a possible ally and intelligencegathering resource rather than as an FTO. U.S. relationships with the GOI and the IRI have been further complicated because of uncertainties regarding the nature of the connection. This is especially true in the case of the IRI, which suspected that the United States intended to use the MeK as ally in a regime-change action against Iran. Through this uncertainty, the United States has exposed itself to accusations of hypocrisy in its war on terrorism.

To some extent, this situation is a result of the Bush administration's approach to international humanitarian law (the law of armed conflict). The Geneva Conventions apply to everyone, including terrorists. Their rules on detention allow both the detention of individuals who present an imperative threat of terrorism and the criminal prosecution of terrorists. By creating an unnecessary exception to the Geneva Conventions in the case of Al Qaeda and the Taliban and then placing foreign insurgents and terrorists in Iraq into that category, DoD was essentially trapped into making legal-status decisions that the public would incorrectly interpret as a dichotomy: Terrorists were "illegal" or "unlawful" combatants not protected by the Geneva Conventions; therefore, anyone protected by the conventions must not be a terrorist. In addition, when



Secretary Rumsfeld applied the terms of the Geneva Conventions to the MeK by granting its members the poorly understood yet evocative status of protected persons, his decision was viewed as a willful rejection of the group's terrorist status.

Neither the United States nor the coalition forces made any serious attempt to counter mistaken impressions about their relationship with the MeK through broad-based communication programs aimed at policymakers and the public. Given the abundance of rhetoric that the U.S. government devotes to promoting its antiterrorism message, it would have been a good idea to direct some of that energy to mitigate this destructive misperception of its stance toward the MeK.

#### Coalition Forces Did Not Establish a Dominant Role at Camp Ashraf

Without a clear mission, and in the face of the predictable chaos surrounding a major military action, it is not entirely surprising that coalition forces seemed to vacillate in their early dealings with the MeK. However, when a rapid victory in and withdrawal from Iraq failed to materialize and it became clear that a coalition presence would be required in the country for an indefinite period, the need for a firm policy regarding the MeK should have been obvious. Unfortunately, coalition actions continued to lack conviction, and, at times, it was not apparent whether the coalition was detaining the MeK or which side was actually in charge at Camp Ashraf.

#### The MeK Was Allowed Considerable Freedom of Movement

Coalition forces disarmed the MeK but took little action to limit the group's freedom of movement after consolidation at Camp Ashraf. Coalition forces provided security outside the camp's gates, mostly through routine patrols of the region, but there have been no patrols of the camp itself since 2003. Although individual housing units are fenced there is no external fence around the 15-square-mile camp. Large numbers of local workers come and go each day without being stopped by coalition guards outside the camp's main entrance. As a result, MeK leaders have had considerable freedom of movement without MNF-I interference. Moreover, the MeK told the JIATF that at least 200 people had arrived at Camp Ashraf since protected-persons status was granted in June 2004. The JIATF knows nothing about them.

#### Insufficient Manpower Was an Ongoing Problem for the Coalition

Lack of manpower has also meant that MNF-I has never conducted a comprehensive search of Camp Ashraf. The MeK would not allow it, and MNF-I was unwilling to divert



manpower at FOB Grizzly from regular regional security missions to force a search upon the group. As a result, there are buildings at Camp Ashraf that no American has ever searched. Former JIATF staff believes that weapons, personnel files, and possibly even MeK members detained by the leadership would likely be discovered in some of these buildings. At the very least, on the basis of rumors that the MeK were storing WMD for Saddam, the Iraq Survey Group, an international team organized by the Pentagon and the CIA to hunt for Iraq's alleged WMD stockpiles, should have secured access to every building.

#### The MeK Was Permitted to Establish a Liaison Office and to Promote Its Cause on a Coalition Base

When the coalition established the FOB near Camp Ashraf, it used the MeK's old, dilapidated buildings and allowed the MeK to retain the nicest one as a liaison office. Although the Third Geneva Convention requires the detaining power to establish a liaison with POWs, it is not standard practice for the U.S. military to provide detainees—much less designated terrorist organizations—with office space on its own bases. JIATF officials attended an average of three liaison meetings each week, and for some time the TF-134 commander flew to FOB Grizzly to attend weekly liaison meetings, even though the agenda usually included nothing but MeK leaders recounting recent news articles about the IRI.

It is not standard practice for base commanders to allow terrorist groups to post propaganda and attempt to proselytize U.S. soldiers on a U.S. base. Not only was this allowed, but in the early days of the occupation, an FOB Grizzly base commander denied a JIATF request to force the MeK to stop doing so.

In addition, it is most certainly not standard practice for officers who report to a detainee operations command to allow terrorist groups under their supervision to hold major public conference events in support of their causes. Yet the MeK was permitted to do exactly that at Camp Ashraf. In addition, for several years, the MeK continued to broadcast from its radio station despite GOI protests and coalition orders to desist.

#### The Coalition Did Not Actively Encourage MeK Members to Leave the Group

One of the purposes of consolidating the MeK at Camp Ashraf rather than at a prison camp or even at multiple MeK camps was to reduce the number of troops needed to protect and control the detainee population. Reducing the number of detainees who required these services would have helped to achieve that goal. The Geneva Conven-



tions allow many tactics aimed at dismantling the opposition and reducing its power. For instance, coalition forces could have separated the leaders from the rank and file, thus loosening the stranglehold of the cult. The Third Geneva Convention provides that officers should be quartered separately from enlisted personnel.

On the other hand, given the MeK's history of cult behavior, efforts to dismantle it would likely have been difficult and frustrating, and they might have included the risk of violence, especially self-inflicted violence. One of the MeK's cultic characteristics is a focus on suicide. Although it had not used suicide as a tactical weapon in terrorist attacks since 1981, the MeK has frequently used the threat of suicide as a negotiating tactic or to frustrate investigations. This proved particularly effective after 10 members immolated themselves in Paris as a protest action following the arrest of Maryam Rajavi, the MeK's co-leader, in 2003. Concerned that the Paris immolations might be repeated on a larger scale at Camp Ashraf if MNF-I tried to break up the MeK, the JIATF rejected proposals to forcibly dismantle the organization.

#### Ultimately, the Only Coalition Policy Toward the MeK Was a Half-Hearted Measure Called "Graceful Degradation"

In 2004, recognizing that nonrefoulement concerns would make the coalition responsible for the MeK for an extended period, MNF-I and DOS officials devised a policy to guide coalition interactions with the MeK until the group's members were released or transferred to the GOI. Dubbed "Graceful Degradation" by a DOS official, this interim policy consisted of three elements:

Maintain security and calm at Camp Ashraf.

Gradually reduce coalition support to the MeK.

Encourage MeK members to leave the camp and go to the TIPF.

A principal goal of this policy was to meet obligations imposed by the Fourth Geneva Convention to support and protect protected persons who are not being interned. This primarily involved protection from violence and degrading treatment and ensuring the MeK's access to food and medical treatment. To ensure safety, MNF-I maintained a U.S. Army MP battalion and a U.S. Marine Corps rifle company at FOB Grizzly to conduct security patrols in the area. Food, fuel, and most living supplies had to be transported to the camp. Coalition forces initially arranged for the MeK to purchase necessary items from the government of Diyala Province, where Camp



Ashraf is located. However, because of Iraqi hostility toward the MeK, the governor soon refused to supply the group's provisions. Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have made travel on many Iraqi roads dangerous, and the MeK's lack of valid Iraqi identification documents expose its members to arrest at security checkpoints. Therefore, beginning in October 2004, coalition forces agreed to escort the MeK to Baghdad and to Iraqi port cities to obtain the goods it needed. However, those escort missions have resulted in the deaths of 14 U.S. soldiers, and at least another 60 have been injured by IEDs. Not until mid-2006, after Major General John Gardner assumed command of detainee operations, were the number of escort missions strictly limited. General Gardner also raised the burden of proof required for the MeK to demonstrate a need for an escort mission, limited the number of MeK members who could ride with the mission, and instituted helicopter travel to avoid IED-lined roads. His successor, Major General Douglas Stone, further reduced the number of escort missions.

While the first two elements of the Graceful Degradation policy have been carried out with modest success, very little effort has been devoted to the third—encouraging departures. During the first year of consolidation, the JIATF negotiated with the MeK to create a process by which members who sought to leave the group could be transferred to the TIFP. The process for these “scheduled departures” allowed the MeK to conduct a multiday “debriefing” period, during which the would-be “defector” (as they were referred to by the JIATF) would have his or her “sensitive” knowledge of the MeK somehow erased. Although the debriefing was a clearly a ploy to threaten MeK members with detainment in retaliation for their requests to leave the group, the JIATF allowed it. Despite this impediment, during the first year of consolidation, the MeK transferred several hundred members to the TIFP—predominantly Iran-Iraq War POWs and other Iranians who had been lured to MeK camps in Iraq.

After this initial flood, departures dwindled to a trickle, but the JIATF took no further action to encourage departures. The JIATF knew that the MeK leadership spread false information regarding bad living conditions at the TIFP, but it took no action to counter this information, even after the conditions improved dramatically when the new TIFP was built in 2006. In addition, it did nothing to assist MeK members who wanted to escape Camp Ashraf without going through the debriefing period in the scheduled departure process. MNF-I has never patrolled Camp Ashraf, so MeK members who would like to leave are not able to be picked up by an MNF-I vehicle or even to communicate their desire to depart to MNF-I representatives.



The only other way to leave was to try to run to the TIPF. The JIATF knew that the MeK was constructing physical obstacles to make departure on foot difficult. For instance, the MeK built a guard post across from the entrance to the TIPF. Although the post's ostensible function was to facilitate scheduled departures, it was clearly constructed for one purpose: to place MeK guards in a position to tackle walkaways. Walkaways (or, in this case, more literally, runaways) had to cover a potentially great distance of open ground, escape MeK patrols, and pass several physical obstacles—including fences, berms, and concertina wire—before finally confronting and somehow getting past the guards stationed in the post. Yet a number of MeK members attempted escape, and a few have successfully reached the TIPF. Despite knowing that the MeK was constructing these physical obstacles, MNF-I did not prevent them from being built, force the MeK to destroy them, or destroy them itself. Its only act of resistance was to refuse the MeK's 2007 request for more concertina wire.

#### What Lessons Have Been Learned from the MeK Experience?

The MeK represents only a chapter in the OIF detainee story. However, it is an important one, representing in many ways a microcosm of the larger issues involved in these types of operations, particularly counterinsurgency operations. Thus, it is possible to extract lessons from the MeK experience that are relevant not just to a single group at a particular moment, but to the full spectrum of detainee operations that the U.S. military might be called upon to conduct in the future. This monograph concludes with an examination of those lessons and the actions that could be taken to address the problems they reveal.

#### Findings and Recommendations

##### Short Term

Each MeK member who has been granted amnesty by the IRI should be repatriated to Iran, unless there is a demonstrable risk that he or she will be persecuted there. To date, however, there is no evidence that Iran has failed to honor its offer of amnesty for the former MeK members who have already returned to the country.

Since December 2003, senior elements of the Iraqi government have indicated that they want to deport the MeK, and all evidence indicates that no country other than Iran will accept the group. Under the terms of the transfer of responsibility for the MeK pursuant to the status of forces agreement, which took effect on January 1, 2009, the GOI now has responsibility for the MeK. The GOI has provided the United States with



written assurances that it will treat the group humanely and will not transfer its members to a country where they will face possible persecution. Nevertheless, the GOI still wants the MeK out of Iraq.

While there is an opportunity to influence Iraqi policy, MNF-I (particularly the detainee operations command and the JIATF at Camp Ashraf) and other U.S. officials should encourage the GOI to ensure that the geographic disposition of the MeK is conducted in a manner that satisfies humanitarian and human rights norms. Particular attention should be given to the approximately 70 percent of the Camp Ashraf population that joined the MeK after the group relocated to Iraq. A substantial number of these MeK members were lured to Iraq under false pretenses or did not have a clear understanding of the group's goals and methods of operation—particularly with respect to its cult behavior—and many have been forced to remain against their will. Repatriation will give these individuals a chance to restart their lives away from the MeK's cult-driven control. The alternative might be a lifetime of statelessness.

The U.S. detainee operations command should work with the ICRC and the GOI to craft a process to ensure that each MeK member's case is treated individually and includes a full nonrefoulement interview. Separating the leaders from the rank and file may be necessary to facilitate this outcome (though the threat of repatriation may lead MeK leaders to disappear on their own, just as Masoud Rajavi and many others did shortly before the commencement of OIF). Repatriation may be either voluntary or involuntary, but only those members who do not face substantial risk of persecution may be sent back to Iran. For the remainder, the detainee operations command should work with the GOI to ensure that each person either receives legal rights of residency in Iraq, is resettled in a third country, or is prosecuted on criminal charges. In cases in which the GOI decides to prosecute a MeK member, steps should be taken to ensure that international due process norms are observed.

### Longer Term

Defense planners should act in coordination with DoD, DOS, and the White House to formulate specific objectives and a clear mission statement for field commanders regarding the treatment of belligerent groups, particularly in circumstances that are politically sensitive. In addition to guidance regarding the defeat of hostile forces, there should be instructions on how to properly detain them after the mission is successfully accomplished.



Prior to the commencement of military action, field commanders and their delegated officers and enlisted staff should be provided with information about the history, goals, and relevant cultural differences of the opposing force. Particular attention should be given to special populations like the MeK, in which the sociological makeup of the group and the ability of its leaders to inflict physical and mental harm on their followers created special problems. This knowledge will always be fine-tuned through experience in the field, and scheduled rotations should allow enough time for outgoing commanders to adequately brief their successors in order to reduce the learning curve and preserve institutional memory.

In OIF, coalition forces were not given even the most basic information about the differences between Iraqi and Iranian cultures and, therefore, were unequipped to detect the ongoing undercurrent of hostility that permeated their relationship. More importantly, in their dealings with the MeK, coalition forces were at a distinct disadvantage from the beginning because they had had no instruction regarding its past activities or its cult characteristics and how these might present particular challenges relating to detainment. Had such information been available, U.S. military officers would have been much less likely to be taken in by the MeK's seemingly cooperative stance. This would not only have prevented their making public statements of support that ultimately proved embarrassing to the United States and destructive to its image in the war on terrorism, but it would also have improved the process employed to interview and categorize detainees and made it consistent with Geneva Convention regulations.

Over time, coalition staff attempted to use the Internet to educate themselves on these topics and especially about the MeK. However, the inaccuracies of press reports and even some scholarly works, combined with the MeK and IRI propaganda that permeates the Internet, made it very difficult to sort fact from fiction.

Commanders in charge of detainee operations should establish stricter oversight and firm, humane control of all types of detainment facilities as well as the procedures that govern day-to-day activities within them. Although assigned residence requires less manpower than internment, the balance of power should favor the detainers, not the detainees, a point that seems to have been lost at Camp Ashraf.

Immediate consideration should be given to separating detainee leaders from their followers. The Third Geneva Convention mandates separate housing for officers and



enlisted personnel. This would dramatically reduce the ability of those leaders to control the larger group, particularly a cult group.

Terrorist organizations in U.S. hands should be dismantled. Foreign terrorist organizations and cultic groups should be dispersed rather than allowed to concentrate their numbers and to control their home facilities. It is clear that dismantling the MeK would have led to desirable outcomes in OIF, among them a likely reduction in U.S. casualties that resulted from carrying out escort missions demanded by MeK leaders as they pursued their own agenda.

During a military conflict, the offices of the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State, along with commanders in the field, should work together to develop a plan for communicating with the public (in the United States, in theater, and worldwide) on issues of political sensitivity. In the case of OIF, the reaction to Secretary Rumsfeld's designation of the MeK as protected persons could have been largely avoided if the reasons for and terms of this action had been adequately explained. Failure to manage communication led to the perception that the United States was supporting an organization that was on its own FTO list. It also complicated detainee operations by giving the MeK the impression that it had the upper hand and led to strained relationships with the GOI, the IRI, the Iraqi public, and the media. Clear mission guidance is not only crucial with respect to combat and its aftermath, it is also necessary in the broad area of communication—not to impose censorship but to ensure that messages are not mixed, that they come from the people who understand the relevant circumstances, and that they do not wrongfully confer the impression that they are official public statements of the U.S. government.

Commanders of detainee operations would benefit if international humanitarian law were to provide a clearer legal framework governing the detention of designated terrorists, nonstate actors, and unusual militias. Because the Bush administration had created a controversial exception to the Geneva Conventions by defining a new category of "illegal" or "unlawful" enemy combatants, a status decision for the MeK was delayed and the one ultimately made by Secretary Rumsfeld denied MeK members their procedural rights under the Third Geneva Convention and may have been legally incorrect.

Rather than use an alternative framework, detainee operations commanders should collaborate with DoD and DOS to secure a legal finding of how the United States



interprets the Geneva Conventions and customary international humanitarian law, particularly with regard to requirements for detention in both international and noninternational conflicts, specifically including designated terrorists, nonstate actors, and unusual militias.

In addition, because the nature of combat is widely acknowledged to be shifting from major operations to smaller, insurgency-driven actions, it is time for the United States to revisit ratification of Additional Protocol II or to consider undertaking negotiations for an additional convention or a new or revised additional protocol to address the protection of civilians during a conflict “not of an international character” and to regulate the detention of designated terrorists, nonstate actors, and unusual militias during international and noninternational conflicts.

## Appendix A

### A Brief History of the MeK Prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom

#### Founding in Iran: 1965–1981

In September 1965, a small group of radical students at Tehran University began meeting to discuss an armed revolt aimed at ousting the government of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, whom they considered a puppet of the United States. They differed from other anti-Shah groups in their embrace of violence and their creation of a new ideology, mixing Shiite Islamism and Marxism, both of which they believed provided a foundation for revolutionary struggle. Their choice of name reflects the group’s Marxist and Islamic roots—Mujahedin-e Khalq, “the People’s Holy Warriors.”

The MeK recruited members and supporters (predominantly middle-class university students and graduates) with its Marxist social policy, coeducational living opportunities, antipathy to U.S. influence, and—unlike traditional Leftist groups—support for a government that reflected Islamic ideals. Members were encouraged to live in coed collectives, where they formed tight social bonds; shared financial resources; and studied Marxist economics, revolutionary theory, principles and techniques of guerrilla warfare, and Shia martyrdom.

Some members trained at Palestinian Liberation Organization camps in Jordan and Lebanon. The Shah’s secret police quickly infiltrated the organization and thwarted the MeK’s first planned terrorist attack, which targeted electric power grids in Tehran and had been scheduled for August 1971. Approximately half of the MeK’s membership



was arrested, and its three founding members were later executed.

Despite the government's crackdown, the MeK continued to build its membership and financial support base, both domestically and internationally, by recruiting at universities and inside prisons and by raising money from the intelligentsia, the domestic bazaar (the traditional Shia middle class), and the Iranian diaspora. The MeK collaborated with other dissident groups, most notably Ayatollah Khomeini's movement and the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

After the failure of its first attempt, the MeK carried out a number of violent attacks on a range of Iranian government and Western targets that it deemed to be supportive of the Shah. These attacks included the 1973 assassination of U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Lewis L. Hawkins and the 1975 assassinations of two other Army officers, Colonel Paul Shaffer and Lieutenant Colonel Jack Turner. An additional attack on August 28, 1976, killed U.S. civilian contractors Robert R. Krongrad, William C. Cottrell, Jr., and Donald G. Smith.

The only original MeK central committee member to survive imprisonment was Masoud Rajavi, a charismatic organizer who quickly assumed the group's leadership when he was released from prison along with other political dissidents in January 1979. In the first of many tactical alliances, Rajavi associated himself with Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution.

However, in the wake of the revolution, Khomeini grew suspicious of Rajavi's ambitions and of the MeK's Marxist slant and widespread popularity. As part of an effort to suppress his opposition, Khomeini dashed the MeK's expectations of participating in the new government, along with those of other leftist and secular groups that had been part of a broad coalition against the Shah. He blocked Rajavi from running for a seat in the Assembly of Experts in 1979, prevented other MeK members from running for or winning seats in the parliament—the majlis—and then prevented Rajavi from appearing on the presidential ballot of January 1980.

After its falling out with Khomeini, the MeK made the first of many dramatic shifts in its alliances and public platforms that were central to its efforts to survive. In mid-1981, it linked with Iran's elected president, Abol-Hassan Banisadr, against Khomeini's powerful IRP and called for social reform. Toppling the IRI (or, as the MeK refers to it, "the mullahs") has remained the MeK's primary goal to this day.

The MeK commenced violent attacks against IRP targets. The most ambitious attack



attributed to the MeK was the bombing of the IRP's Tehran headquarters on June 28, 1981. This attack killed more than 71 members of the Iranian leadership, including cleric Ayatollah Beheshti, who was both secretary-general of the IRP and chief justice of the IRI's judicial system. Of particular modern significance was another June 1981 MeK bombing that critically injured the IRI's present-day supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, permanently limiting his use of his right arm.

Although Rajavi and the MeK leadership continued to inspire large demonstrations in Tehran, including one that allegedly drew 500,000 people on very short notice, Khomeini's Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps brutally suppressed the MeK, arresting and executing thousands of members and supporters. The armed revolt was poorly planned and short-lived. On July 29, 1981, Rajavi, the MeK leadership, and Banisadr escaped to Paris by hijacking an Iranian Air Force Boeing 707. A small portion of the MeK rank and file followed the leadership to Europe, moved into Iranian Kurdistan, or crossed the border into Iraq, where they established a series of communes.

While the MeK leadership was in exile, the underground network that remained in Iran continued to plan and conduct attacks aimed at destabilizing the Khomeini regime, such as the August 1981 bombing that killed the Iranian president and prime minister. The extent of casualties from MeK attacks is disputed. The MeK claims to have attacked only IRI government and military targets, but the IRI and anti-MeK groups claim that the MeK hijacked a number of airplanes and killed thousands of civilians, directly or indirectly.

#### Exile in France: 1981–1986

Once in Paris, Rajavi and Banisadr formed the NCRI, an umbrella organization of Iranian dissident groups that shared a common opposition to Khomeini and the IRI, with Rajavi and Banisadr serving as cochairs. The NCRI sought political and financial support from Western governments and individuals opposed to the IRI and attempted to present itself as the alternative government to the IRI, mimicking the approach of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. In another survival shift for Rajavi, the NCRI hid the MeK's Marxist-Islamic philosophy from European and American view and instead promoted a new platform espousing such political values as secular government, democratic elections, freedom of expression, equal rights for women, human rights, and a free-market economy, only some of which the MeK had previously endorsed. It also urged autonomy for Iranian Kurdistan and the repatriation of Iranian exiles.



The NCRI styled itself as the parliament-in-exile of the Iranian Resistance, with Rajavi as the president-elect, fighting for the establishment of a democratic Islamic republic in Iran. It commenced a public-relations campaign aimed at publicizing the IRI's repression and offered intelligence on the IRI's operations to Western governments. The group disseminated its messages through its own media outlets, including newspapers and a radio station.

Although a large portion of the NCRI's funding was provided by Saddam Hussein and some came from Saudi Arabia, the NCRI also raised money through fraud. The FBI arrested seven MeK supporters for raising more than \$1 million for a sham charity, the Committee for Human Rights in Iran, at Los Angeles International Airport. The British Charities Commission closed another MeK sham charity, Iran Aid, after finding no "verifiable links between the money donated by the British public [approximately £5 million annually] and charitable work in Iran." The German High Court closed several MeK safe houses, "foster" homes, and compounds after an investigation revealed that the MeK fraudulently collected between \$5 million and \$10 million in social welfare benefits for MeK children sent to Europe at the outset of the first Gulf War.

As Rajavi increasingly transformed the NCRI from an umbrella organization into a MeK subsidiary, early partners separated from the consortium, including the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan. Banisadr himself withdrew from the NCRI in March 1983, and Rajavi divorced Banisadr's daughter, whom he had married the previous year.

In 1985, Rajavi announced that he had appointed Maryam Azodanlu, the wife of his close associate Mehdi Abrishamchi, as co-leader of the MeK. She would soon divorce her husband and marry Rajavi. Together, they would launch a new "ideological revolution" that would, over time, transform the MeK into a cult group.

#### Relocation to Iraq to Fight for Saddam: 1986–1988

After invading Iran, Saddam Hussein began to supply funds to enable the MeK to extend the reach of the NCRI's European publicity campaign against the IRI as payment for any intelligence that the MeK could offer regarding Iran. In 1986, in exchange for Iran's assistance in securing the release of French hostages held in Lebanon, France attempted to expel the MeK leadership and end the MeK's use of France as its western base. That year, the MeK's leadership cadre accepted an invitation from Saddam to move the group to Iraq, purportedly to be closer to the war then being fought against the IRI but actually to join forces and fight with Saddam's



military.

Saddam provided the MeK with protection, money, weapons, ammunition, vehicles, tanks, military training, and the use (but not ownership) of land. With these resources, the MeK leadership established new compounds in Iraq and encouraged MeK supporters in Iran and elsewhere to relocate to Iraq. Approximately 7,000 members, comprising approximately 80 percent of the exiled MeK population, went to those camps. Rajavi named the MeK contingent in Iraq the National Liberation Army (NLA) to portray the MeK as a more legitimate insurrectionist group.

In exchange for his support, the MeK provided Saddam with intelligence on the IRI, interrogation and translation services, and direct military assistance. The MeK launched numerous raids across the border into Iran, clashing with Iranian military forces and the IRGC, sometimes with the assistance of the Iraqi military.

On July 25, 1988, shortly after Khomeini's cease-fire announcement, the MeK launched its largest mission, Operation Eternal Light, hoping to deliver the final blow to the IRI. Rajavi hoped that, through a demonstration of its manpower, the MeK could incite a domestic revolt against the IRI. He ordered the entire MeK contingent in Iraq to invade Iran, assigning each NLA brigade a province to "liberate," anticipating that the Iranian military and public would support the MeK and turn against the IRI. However, the envisaged military and popular support in Iran did not materialize—at least in part because the MeK had allied itself with the instigator of the war and had killed Iranian conscripts—and the operation was crushed by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. The Operation Eternal Light invasion cost the MeK more than 1,500 NLA lives (approximately a quarter of the MeK contingent living in Iraq) and prompted the Iranian regime to carry out a mass execution of more than 4,000 MeK members and sympathizers living in Iran. Nevertheless (as described in Appendix B), the Rajavi leadership leveraged the quasimilitary character of the NLA and the failure of the mission to consolidate its control over the MeK and to initiate a series of policy changes that continued the transformation of the increasingly insular organization into a cult.

#### Exile in Iraq, 1988–2003

Despite the MeK's many asserted military "successes," these operations failed to undermine the IRI and instead intensified the Iranian public's negative view of the MeK, primarily because of its willingness to kill Iranian conscripts. Although it has not conducted a large-scale military action since 1988, the MeK continued to commit acts



of violence in Iran and abroad, aiming at Iranian government or military targets but sometimes injuring or killing bystanders. Some of these attacks have occurred in the United States and Europe. The MeK often asserts that it has been blamed for attacks conducted by unaffiliated or splinter organizations. However, the MeK itself, through its NCRI, claimed responsibility for more than 350 attacks in 2000 and 2001 alone.

The MeK's service to Saddam continued after the Iran-Iraq War. For years, the group provided security services in the region around its camps. In the aftermath of the first Gulf War, the MeK is widely believed to have assisted Saddam in the violent suppression of the Shia and Kurdish uprisings of 1991. MeK officials strenuously deny any involvement in the atrocities against the Shia and Kurds, alleging that they were attacked by combined Kurdish and Iranian forces and that the MeK did not even defend itself. However, the allegations of the group's complicity with Saddam are corroborated by press reports that quote Maryam Rajavi encouraging MeK members to "take the Kurds under your tanks, and save your bullets for the Iranian Revolutionary Guards," as well as the timing of Saddam's conferring the Rafedeen Medallion—a high honor in the Iraqi military—on Masoud Rajavi. Whatever the truth of the matter, much of the Iraqi public believes that the MeK did commit violent acts on Saddam's behalf against Shias and Kurds.

Recruitment has been a major challenge for the MeK since it fled Iran in 1981. After allying with Saddam and making Iraq its base, the MeK faced an even greater shortfall in volunteers. One recruiting tactic used by the MeK was arranged with the assistance of Saddam's government. Iranian prisoners from the Iran-Iraq War were offered the choice of going to MeK camps and eventually being repatriated or remaining in Iraqi prison camps. As a result, hundreds chose to join the MeK; however, they were not repatriated.

The MeK naturally sought out Iranian dissidents, but it also recruited other Iranians using false pretenses. Among the targeted populations were Iranian economic refugees, people with charitable impulses, and MeK family members. Many recruits were enticed through false promises of paid employment, land, assistance in processing asylum requests, free visits to family members, public-health volunteer opportunities, and even marriage. Thus, it is highly likely that many MeK recruits since 1986 were not "volunteers."

Almost all MeK members were obliged to turn over their identity documents to



the leadership for “safekeeping.” The MeK now claims that these documents were securely held until they were destroyed by coalition bombs during OIF. Currently without passports, most MeK members are effectively stateless. By confiscating identity documents and refusing to legalize the presence of MeK members in Saddam’s Iraq, the leadership has kept its members under duress at MeK camps in Iraq by threatening prosecution and incarceration for illegal entry followed by deportation to Iran and the risk of being persecuted or even executed there.

In 1997, the U.S. Secretary of State designated the MeK an FTO pursuant to the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996. Some other Western governments, including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and the European Union, have since listed the MeK either as a terrorist organization or an organization that may not receive donations. This designation criminalized all MeK fundraising efforts (as well as those of the NCRI when it was designated an FTO in 2003). In 2001, criminal investigations exposed ongoing money laundering activities in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Since then, several MeK members have been arrested and prosecuted for fraudulently soliciting funds for imaginary orphanages and charities and then using the funds to purchase weapons and telecommunication equipment.

The FBI discovered MeK cells in several U.S. cities. These cells had large numbers of Iranian members, thousands of whom the MeK had helped smuggle into the United States. The 2003 arrest of Maryam Rajavi in Paris in connection with an FBI investigation uncovered evidence of continued illicit financing. Police discovered \$9 million in cash as well as documents indicating that the MeK maintains international bank accounts, some of which contained tens of millions

of dollars. Former members indicate that the MeK also invests in stocks and owns properties, such as hotels and nightclubs, in Dubai and elsewhere. Through the NCRI, the MeK responded to its designation as an FTO and other related charges with a public-relations campaign to present itself to the United States and Europe as a legitimate dissident group. This effort (combined with campaign donations) has had some success, though the NCRI grossly overstates its level of support in the West by making such misleading claims as “[t]he majority of members of the US Congress and the parliaments of Great Britain, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, Sweden, Norway, the European Parliament and numerous Danish, French, German, Dutch and Swiss parliamentarians declare their support for the NCRI and its President-elect.”



Although many legislatures have indeed signed letters advocating democracy in Iran or even defending the MeK's opposition to the IRI—actions that have sometimes misled journalists and scholars about the extent of the MeK's political base—very few legislators in the West actively endorse the MeK or even know much about the group. An analysis requested by the Joint Chiefs of Staff during OIF found that the MeK's support in Congress was not significant. Individual members who appear to view the MeK in a positive light tend to be energetic opponents of the IRI or have significant numbers of Iranian-Americans in their districts. Others are simply misinformed.

Following NCRI press conferences in 2002 and 2003 that publicly revealed the IRI's nuclear program, the MeK enjoyed a resurgence of political support. For instance, at a 2005 press conference, President George W. Bush stated that the IRI's nuclear program had been uncovered "because a dissident group pointed it out to the world." However, this support ebbed and flowed along with the desire to conduct a regime-change operation in Iran, and current indications are that the burst of interest has largely dissipated.

The MeK claims that it formally rejected the use of violence in 2001. Although there is limited documentary proof of this decision in either English or Farsi, the UK Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission accepted the MeK's assertion based on the absence of attacks claimed by or attributed to the group after 2001 (aside from one in 2002 that the MeK quickly recanted). This was a significant change considering that, as previously noted, the MeK claimed responsibility for carrying out more than 350 attacks in 2000 and 2001. For this reason, along with issues having to do with legal process, the UK has since removed the MeK from its list of proscribed organizations. In January 2009, the European Union removed the group from its terrorist list for procedural reasons.

There may have been a change in the status of the MeK's leadership as well. Ever since the commencement of OIF, Masoud Rajavi has been missing. It is unknown whether he is in hiding or whether he is even alive. In his absence, Maryam Rajavi, the "president-elect" of Iran, according to the NCRI, has become the sole visible leader of the MeK. However, portraits of both Masoud and Maryam Rajavi continue to be displayed in all buildings at Camp Ashraf.

## Appendix B

### Cultic Characteristics of the MeK



The MeK is frequently described as a “cultish” group, but to date, there has been no examination of how its practices relate to cult characteristics defined by experts in the field. This appendix places credible reports about MeK practices into the context of cult theory.

### The MeK’s Transition from Popular Organization to Exiled Cult

Although the MeK had become the most popular dissident group in Iran, its failure to overthrow the IRI and its subsequent exile undermined its optimism and openness. In France, Masoud Rajavi dramatically changed the nature of the organization. In 1985, he announced that Maryam Azodanlu, the wife of his close associate Mehdi Abrishamchi and the younger sister of a senior MeK member, would assume the position of MeK co-leader. Rajavi divorced his second wife, the daughter of former Iranian president Abol-Hasan Banisadr, Rajavi’s ally, and announced that Maryam would divorce her husband and marry him. These actions would advance a new “ideological revolution.”

The Rajavis claimed that their new revolution was meant to highlight the equality of women, an idea that the IRI found threatening. Although the MeK did promote women to leadership positions, which constituted a reversal of tradition in Iranian society, the marriage and the subsequent aggrandizement of Masoud Rajavi’s leadership role marked the beginning of an organizational transformation into a cult of personality. Initial changes included increased mandated study, enforced communal living arrangements, and imposed supervision of the group’s membership in exile throughout Europe. A secondary goal was to purge less committed members. This act was not intended to alienate allied Iranian dissident organizations, but that was the result.

After the MeK moved to Iraq in 1986, the Rajavis created the NLA, which included nearly the entire MeK contingent in Iraq, and they used its militaristic structure to consolidate their control. Following the failure of Operation Eternal Light, the Rajavis initiated a series of policy changes that continued the transformation of the increasingly insular organization into a cult. While rarely admitting total failure, Rajavi implied in his speeches that the operation had not achieved its goals due to insufficient devotion to the overthrow of the IRI among the MeK rank and file, who were instead distracted by sexual interests as a result of their coeducational housing. To enforce a new “military” discipline, rank-and-file members were instructed not just to move into gender-segregated housing but also to divorce their spouses, maintain complete celibacy, and even cut off communication with friends and family, both within and beyond MeK com-



pounds. Love for the Rajavis was to replace love for spouses and family. In addition, the Rajavis used funding provided by Saddam to construct self-sufficient camps that included schools, medical clinics, training centers, and prisons (often called “reeducation centers”) so that the population had little need for contact with the society beyond its walls.

### Application of Cult Theory to the MeK

MeK leaders and supporters vigorously deny that the MeK is a cult. They allege that former MeK members and critics of the MeK are either Iranian agents or their dupes. However, interviews with U.S. military and civilian officials, information voluntarily furnished by former MeK members at the ARC, and visits to Camp Ashraf suggest that these denials are not credible.

The cult characteristics described in this appendix have been widely reported by former MeK members and by Human Rights Watch. They have also been substantiated, at least in part, by interviews with JIATF-Ashraf officers and by information volunteered by former MeK members at the ARC.

### Authoritarian, Charismatic Leadership

Masoud Rajavi appointed himself and Maryam leader and co-leader of the MeK (and, by extension, of Iran) for life, though the NCRI asserts that it would quickly mount elections upon taking control of Iran. This concept of perpetual leadership is reflected in the MeK chant “Iran-Rajavi, Rajavi-Iran” that has been used since the MeK began its transformation into a cult. Equally reflective of the absolute authority wielded by Rajavi is his informal title Imam-e Hal (the present Imam) used by MeK membership. The egocentric character of Masoud Rajavi’s leadership is also illustrated by his willingness to compare his own marriage to that of the Prophet Muhammad. In addition, the MeK membership ceremony involves swearing an oath of devotion to the Rajavis on the Koran. Pictures of the Rajavis adorn all MeK buildings; banners with their portraits hang in the streets of Camp Ashraf. Criticism of the Rajavi leadership is not allowed. As the MeK newspaper, the Mojahed, declared,

To understand this great revolution . . . is to understand and gain a deep insight into the greatness of our new leadership, meaning leadership of Masoud and Maryam. It is to believe in them as well as to show ideological and revolutionary obedience of them [sic].



However, with the commencement of OIF, Masoud Rajavi disappeared. It is unknown whether he is alive or in hiding. Banners announcing his return have appeared from time to time at Camp Ashraf, but Maryam remains the visible leader of the MeK.

### Intense Ideological Exploitation and Isolation

The MeK leadership requires members to study MeK ideology and to participate in indoctrination sessions that are characterized by a mix of propaganda and fear tactics. Group members are required to watch films of the Rajavis' speeches and footage of various street demonstrations throughout Europe. The MeK broadcasts from its own radio and television stations. MeK leaders permit group members to listen only to these stations and to read only internal reports and bulletins, such as the MeK-produced Mojahed newspaper and other approved texts. Violators are punished. To reduce the appearance of brainwashing, MeK leaders describe these restricted activities as opposition to the IRI or as exercises in military theory.

MeK-sponsored media have capitalized on this isolation by instilling MeK members with a sense of fear and paranoia about the outside world, particularly of Iran and the IRI regime. MeK publications often criticize those who fail to show adequate support for the group or who have left it, labeling them as enemies, traitors, and "Iranian agents." Members who express a desire to watch television or read books not sanctioned by the leadership have often been classified as "difficult." A visit to the MeK library at Camp Ashraf makes it evident that its purpose is not to expand minds. However, with portraits of American and European writers lining the garden path that leads to the library, the MeK uses the facility to attempt to persuade visitors that it encourages freedom of thought.

### Sexual Control

As a part of the "ideological revolution," the Rajavis mandated divorce and celibacy. Compulsory divorce required couples to place their wedding rings in a bowl and renounce their affections for one another. (The rules did not apply to the Rajavi marriage, however, nor were MeK leaders required to be celibate.) The MeK denies that these acts were anything but spontaneous and voluntary, claiming, "The reality is that the Mujahideen is based in the territory of a country where . . . family life became impossible" and that every MeK member made the individual, noncompulsory decision to "forgo family life." This denial is not credible, particularly when taking into account the MeK's strict limitations on gender interaction, as described next. Further-



more, Iraqi families would likely disagree with this assessment of prospects for family life even during wartime.

### Emotional Isolation

In addition to their geographic and ideological isolation, MeK members in Iraq are severely socially and emotionally isolated, even within their communal living arrangements. Relatives and former spouses are placed in different compounds and are not allowed to see each other.

Prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 1991, children were sent to live with foster families in Europe, ostensibly to protect them from the impending invasion, though some returned to Iraq years later. Close friendships are considered "liberal relations" and are strictly forbidden. Members may freely communicate only with their unit commanders, and a commander's permission is required for any other type of communication. Informants monitor conversations among members. In many cases, MeK members' families in Iran have been told that their relatives had died or been killed.

Despite the MeK's and NCRI's claim to support gender equality and the placement of women in leadership roles, men and women are kept strictly apart in MeK camps. Housing is segregated by gender, and in other buildings, lines are painted down the middle of hallways, separating them into men's and women's sides. Men and women below the leadership level are prohibited from contact with one another unless they have obtained official case-by-case permission. Shaking hands is prohibited across genders. Even the gas station at Camp Ashraf has separate hours for men and women.

### Extreme, Degrading Peer Pressure

The MeK holds daily, weekly, and monthly "sessions" that involve forced public confessions aimed at expelling deviant thoughts and behaviors that are believed to undermine group coherence. MeK members are required to keep daily records of their thoughts and nighttime dreams, particularly sexual thoughts and desires (which are, of course, forbidden), as well as observations about their fellow members. They must submit their journals to their supervisors. During large meetings, members often are forced to read their reports aloud and to make self-critical statements. MeK members are often required to admit to sexual thoughts. In a true Catch-22 situation, if they do not, they will be considered to have been caught in a lie because such thoughts are considered inevitable.



## Deceptive Recruitment

Prior to its exile, the MeK was the largest group to oppose the IRI. The organization enjoyed significant support among the young and educated middle class. Prospective members were attracted to the MeK's mission, its Marxist-Islamic ideology, and the opportunity to live in coeducational housing and enjoy social debates. However, its ability to recruit was greatly reduced by the group's departure from Iran, first to France and then to Iraq; and the MeK's alliance with Saddam, the instigator of the devastating Iran-Iraq War.

By 1987, approximately 7,000 MeK members were in Iraq, which may have included as much as 80 percent of the membership in exile. To add to its numbers, the MeK leadership employed several deceptive recruitment techniques aimed at a range of Iranian subgroups. With the assistance of Saddam's government, Iranian prisoners from the Iran-Iraq War were offered the choice of remaining in Iraqi prison camps or going to MeK camps where they would have the prospect of repatriation. To recruit potential members still living in Iran, the MeK smuggled family members out of the country to visit relatives at camps in Iraq and then prevented their subsequent departure. Others were victims of fraud in human trafficking: The MeK would arrange for Iranians who paid to be smuggled out of Iran to be redirected to MeK camps in Iraq rather than to their intended destinations.

The MeK also targeted Iranians outside of Iran—for example, economic refugees, people with charitable impulses, and MeK family members abroad. Many were enticed not with promises of an opportunity to fight the IRI, but rather through promises of paid employment as translators, assistance in processing asylum requests, free visits to family members, public-health volunteer opportunities, and even marriage. All "recruits" were brought into Iraq illegally and then required to hand over their identity documents for "safekeeping," effectively trapping them at MeK compounds.

These findings suggest that many MeK recruits since 1986 were not true volunteers and have been kept at MeK camps in Iraq under duress. As of June 2004, JIATF estimated that, of the MeK population at Camp Ashraf, only 5 percent had joined prior to the Iranian Revolution and 25 percent had joined at the time of the revolution. A full quarter (approximately 1,500 to 1,800) had been POWs, and 45 percent had arrived at Camp Ashraf after the 1988 move to Iraq. Thus, it is possible that nearly 70 percent of the MeK population may have been recruited through deception and kept at Camp



Ashraf against their will.

### Forced Labor and Sleep Deprivation

Cults often use long work hours and sleep deprivation as ways to wear down their members and prevent them from identifying with anything other than the group. MeK members often work 16- to 17-hour days and are limited to a few hours' sleep per night, plus an hour-long nap. To maintain this pace, the MeK leadership mandates continual "makework" construction and beautification projects and, until OIF, ongoing military training. The results are evident at Camp Ashraf. Built out of the desert, the camp has grand avenues lined with trees and is adorned with an exceptional number of parks, fountains, meeting halls, and monuments, many of which glorify MeK martyrs.

### Physical Abuse, Imprisonment, and Lack of Exit Options

Former MeK members claim that punishment was frequently meted out for such offenses as

expressing or fomenting disagreement with the political/military strategy of the MeK

listening to foreign radio stations

sharing individual political views with other members

failing to attend mandatory meetings

making personal phone calls

avoiding participation in military drills

refusing to participate in the compulsory "ideological divorce"

having sexual thoughts

communicating with friends or family

smoking

asking to leave the MeK.

Recent accounts recall that punishment for disagreeing with MeK policies ranged from forced written confessions of disloyalty to incarceration in special facilities at Camp Ashraf. Former members report torture and long periods of solitary confinement as punishment for disloyalty.



To prevent MeK members from departing the camps, almost all MeK recruits were obliged to turn over their identity documents to the MeK for “safekeeping.” The MeK now claims that these documents were securely held until they were destroyed by coalition bombs. Although the group was invited into Iraq and given the use of land by Saddam, the MeK never sought legal residence there. When recruits were brought into the country, Iraqi rules regarding alien visits or immigration were intentionally not observed. With Saddam’s complicity, the MeK leadership was then able to threaten recalcitrant members with prosecution for their illegal presence in Iraq, which would mean incarceration in an Iraqi prison for several years, followed by deportation to Iran, where, members were told, they would face certain persecution. By bringing its members into Iraq illegally and then confiscating their identity documents, the MeK was able to trap them.

### Patterns of Suicide

The MeK extols suicide but, unlike jihadist groups, has not used it in attacks since 1981. Prior to their capture in 2003, all MeK members carried cyanide tablets in leather pouches tied around their necks. MeK assassins were instructed to swallow the cyanide if captured during a mission. Masoud Rajavi reputedly has called all MeK members “living martyrs,” and self-immolation is a popular form of MeK suicide. For example, in 2003, there were approximately 10 self-immolations (which killed two) in protest of Maryam Rajavi’s arrest in Paris. The MeK has also used the threat of immolation as a negotiating tool with the JIATF, with British investigators, and with France. Former members indicate that a small number of MeK members committed suicide because they were prevented from leaving the organization and that suicide was also claimed as the cause of death for recalcitrant members who were tortured to death.

### Denial of Cultic Tendencies

The MeK and its apologists deny that the MeK is a cult, instead contending that it is a “deeply democratic organization whose guiding principle on all issues is referendum and discussion until a consensus is reached.” The MeK admits to certain practices—such as divorce and celibacy—but justifies them as necessary for effective military operations and claims that they are voluntarily adopted by the membership. However, the MeK denies many other practices attributed to it by its former members, such as intense indoctrination techniques like “thought reform” (commonly referred to as brainwashing) and limiting exit options.

As with all criticism aimed at the group, the MeK blames IRI propaganda for



characterizing it as a cult. Certainly, the IRI seeks to discredit the MeK, and this includes publicizing the MeK's cultic characteristics. But the fact that the IRI seeks to discredit the MeK does not imply that all of its criticisms are inherently untrustworthy. The IRI's campaign has contributed to weakened support for the MeK in Iran. Although it is not currently possible to conduct a scientific survey of Iranians to gauge their opinions about the MeK—and, in the absence of diplomatic or cultural ties, information regarding Iranian perceptions is extremely limited—anecdotal evidence suggests that the MeK's cultic characteristics have contributed to its decline in popularity since 1981. An American journalist reports that Iranians whom she interviewed likened the MeK to the Khmer Rouge and the Branch Davidian cult in Waco, Texas, comparisons that have also been made by current and former U.S. officials. Of course, as noted earlier, the MeK's decision to align itself with Saddam against the IRI and to kill Iranian conscripts during the brutal Iran-Iraq War greatly eroded its popular support in Iran. Although the MeK repeatedly claims to be the most influential opposition group in that country, in reality it appears that this once-prominent dissident group can now validly claim only to be highly organized and well (albeit illegally) funded.

## Appendix D

### What Is a Foreign Terrorist Organization?

Congress created the Foreign Terrorist Organizations List as part of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996. There are other terrorist lists, such as those for state sponsors of terrorism, specially designated terrorists, and specially designated global terrorists. However, of these, this FTO list is the most widely known, and it differs from the others in that it identifies groups rather than individuals and bars members and representatives of those groups from immigrating to the United States. Moreover, it is a crime to knowingly provide "material support and resources" to an FTO. U.S. financial institutions holding funds belonging to an FTO or its agents must secure the funds and report them to the Office of Foreign Assets Control at the Treasury Department.

To be listed as an FTO, a foreign organization must engage in—or retain the capability and intent to engage in—a terrorist activity or terrorism (as defined by statute) that threatens the security of U.S. nationals or U.S. national security. Designation occurs through an interagency process with public notice in the Federal Register, but the ultimate decision lies with the Secretary of State. Designation lasts two years and may be renewed. The secretary may cancel the designation at any time if



circumstances or national security concerns warrant. When the FTO list was created in 1997, one of the first groups to be put on it was the MeK because of its attacks on U.S. citizens and U.S. companies in Iran during the 1970s, including the assassinations of six U.S. citizens. (The NCRI was added to the FTO list as a MeK alias in 2003.) The MeK has also been added to the terrorist lists of other countries, including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and the European Union. The MeK has mounted legal challenges against its listing; its efforts have been successful in the UK and in the EU.

It should be noted that, while the MeK's FTO designation has shaped policy and media discussions, that designation has no relevance to its status under the Geneva Conventions. However, to the extent that coalition forces were protecting rather than detaining the MeK, applying the Geneva Conventions to the MeK had the effect of immunizing coalition forces from liability for providing material support to terrorists by virtue of the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

● Rand Corporation, "The Mujahedin-e Khalq in Iraq A Policy Conundrum," 2009; available at [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND\\_MG871.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND_MG871.pdf)



## Which Path to Persia



Published in 2009 by the Washington, D.C.-based Brookings Institute, “Which Path to Persia?” details some options for new American strategy towards Iran. In its 7th chapter, the report deals with the issue of inspiring an insurgency and supporting Iranian opposition groups. This chapter features an introduction to the MKO as an opposition group which is a potential option for the US to work with. The Saban Center at the Brookings Institute rightfully predicted that in order to work with the MKO, at least in an overt manner, “Washington would need to remove it from the list of foreign terrorist organizations”.

Following are the lines of the report describing the MKO:

### National Council of Resistance/Mujahedin-e Khalq

Perhaps the most prominent (and certainly the most controversial) opposition group that has attracted attention as a potential U.S. proxy is the NCRI (National Council of Resistance of Iran), the political movement established by the MEK (Mujahedin-e Khalq). Critics believe the group to be undemocratic and unpopular, and indeed anti-American. In contrast, the group’s champions contend that the movement’s long-standing opposition to the Iranian regime and record of successful attacks on and intelligence-gathering operations against the regime make it worthy of U.S. support. They also argue that the group is no longer anti-American and question the merit of earlier accusations. Raymond Tanter, one of the group’s supporters in the United States, contends that the MEK and the NCRI are allies for regime change in Tehran and also act as a useful proxy for gathering intelligence. The MEK’s greatest intelligence coup was the provision of intelligence in 2002 that led to the discovery of



a secret site in Iran for enriching uranium.

Despite its defenders' claims, the MEK remains on the U.S. government list of foreign terrorist organizations. In the 1970s, the group killed three U.S. officers and three civilian contractors in Iran. During the 1979-1980 hostage crisis, the group praised the decision to take American hostages and Elaine Sciolino reported that while group leaders publicly condemned the 9/11 attacks, within the group celebrations were widespread.

Undeniably, the group has conducted terrorist attacks—often excused by the MEK's advocates because they are directed against the Iranian government. For example, in 1981, the group bombed the headquarters of the Islamic Republic Party, which was then the clerical leadership's main political organization, killing an estimated 70 senior officials. More recently, the group has claimed credit for over a dozen mortar attacks, assassinations, and other assaults on Iranian civilian and military targets between 1998 and 2001.

At the very least, to work more closely with the group (at least in an overt manner), Washington would need to remove it from the list of foreign terrorist organizations.

The group itself also appears to be undemocratic and enjoys little popularity in Iran itself. It has no political base in the country, although it appears to have an operational presence. In particular, its active participation on Saddam Husayn's side during the bitter Iran-Iraq War made the group widely loathed. In addition, many aspects of the group are cultish, and its leaders, Massoud and Maryam Rajavi, are revered to the point of obsession.

As Iran scholar Ervand Abrahamian claims, "It is a mystical cult. . . . If Massoud Rajavi got up tomorrow and said the world was flat, his members would accept it."

● Kenneth M. Pollack et al., "Which Path to Persia," The Brookings Institution, June 20, 2009; available at [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2009/6/iran%20strategy/06\\_iran\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2009/6/iran%20strategy/06_iran_strategy.pdf)



## Human Rights Abuses Inside the MKO Camps

The Federation of American Scientists (FAS), a Washington, D.C.-based nonpartisan organization, works to provide science-based analysis of and solutions to protect against catastrophic threats to national and international security. What follows is a report on the MKO by John Pike, a researcher at FAS, in 2004.

Mujahedeen-e Khalq (MEK)

Sazman-e Mojahedin-e Khalq-e Iran

Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO)

National Liberation Army of Iran (NLA)

People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI)

Muslim Iranian Student's Society

National Council of Resistance (NCR)

National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI)

### Description

The MEK philosophy mixes Marxism and Islam. Formed in the 1960s, the organization was expelled from Iran after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, and its primary support came from the former Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein since the late 1980s. The MEK's history is filled with anti-Western attacks as well as terrorist attacks on the interests of the clerical regime in Iran and abroad. The MEK now advocates the overthrow of the Iranian regime and its replacement with the group's own leadership.

### Activities

The group's worldwide campaign against the Iranian Government stresses propaganda and occasionally uses terrorism. During the 1970s, the MEK killed US military personnel and US civilians working on defense projects in Tehran and supported the takeover in 1979 of the US Embassy in Tehran. In 1981, the MEK detonated bombs in the head office of the Islamic Republic Party and the Premier's office, killing some 70 high-ranking Iranian officials, including chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, President Mohammad-Ali Rajaei, and Premier Mohammad-Javad Bahrani. Near the end of the war with Iran during 1980-88, Baghdad armed the MEK with military equipment and sent it into action against Iranian forces. In 1991, it assisted the Government of Iraq in suppressing the Shia



and Kurdish uprisings in southern Iraq and the Kurdish uprisings in the north. In April 1992, the MEK conducted near-simultaneous attacks on Iranian Embassies and installations in 13 countries, demonstrating the group's ability to mount large-scale operations overseas. In April 1999, the MEK targeted key military officers and assassinated the deputy chief of the Armed Forces General Staff. In April 2000, the MEK attempted to assassinate the commander of the Nasr Headquarters' Tehran's interagency board responsible for coordinating policies on Iraq. The normal pace of anti-Iranian operations increased during the Operation Great Bahman in February 2000, when the group launched a dozen attacks against Iran. In 2000 and 2001, the MEK was involved regularly in mortar attacks and hit-and run raids on Iranian military and law-enforcement units and government buildings near the Iran-Iraq border, although MEK terrorism in Iran declined throughout the remainder of 2001. In February 2000, for example, the MEK launched a mortar attack against the leadership complex in Tehran that houses the offices of the Supreme Leader and the President. Coalition aircraft bombed MEK bases during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the Coalition forced the MEK forces to surrender in May 2003. The future of the MEK forces remains undetermined with Coalition forces.

### Strength

Some 3,800 members are confined to Camp Ashraf, the MEK's main compound near Baghdad, where they remain under Coalition control. As a condition of the cease-fire agreement, the group relinquished its weapons, including tanks, armored vehicles, and heavy artillery.

### Location/Area of Operation

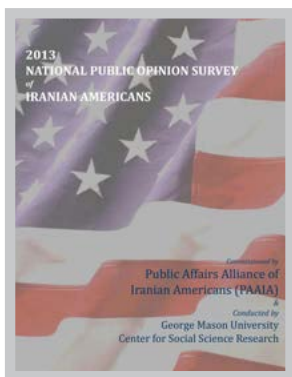
In the 1980s, the MEK's leaders were forced by Iranian security forces to flee to France. On resettling in Iraq in 1987, almost all of its armed units were stationed in fortified bases near the border with Iran. Since Operation Iraqi Freedom, the bulk of the group is limited to Camp Ashraf though an overseas support structure remains with associates and supporters scattered throughout Europe and North America.

### External Aid

Before Operation Iraqi Freedom, the group received all of its military assistance, and most of its financial support, from the former Iraqi regime. The MEK also has used front organizations to solicit contributions from expatriate Iranian communities.



## Poll: Scant Support for MKO among Iranian Americans



A survey released in mid-April, 2013, by the Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA), reveals that only 5 percent of a total of 15 percent of Iranian Americans who support opposition groups or figures in Iran support the terrorist MKO group.

The results of this survey truly represent the lack of support for the terrorist MKO group among Iranian patriots who are aware of the group's treasonable acts against the Iranian people and the government of Islamic Republic, including siding with the invader of Iran, Saddam Hussein, during the 1980s and killing and injuring thousands of Iranian innocent civilians.

According to the survey a total of fifteen percent (15%) of Iranian Americans polled in the 2013 survey stated that they supported "opposition groups or figures" in Iran. Seventy-nine percent indicated that they did not support any opposition groups or figures, while 6% were unsure.

Despite the MKO has blown its popularity out of all proportions, just 5% of those who indicated that they supported such groups or figures said they would support MKO.



## Iranians are Almost Uniformly Dismissive of MKO

**B**ased on input from State Department Iran-watchers and consular interviewing officers in the main posts that interact with Iranians on a regular basis, i.e. Ankara, Baku, Berlin, Dubai, and Istanbul, a cable from the U.S. Consulate in Dubai has focused on the Iranian popular attitudes towards the MKO.

“Showing a unanimity rare among Iranians, anecdotal information gleaned from both ordinary Iranians living inside Iran and abroad from Iran analysts strongly indicates that the ‘Mujahedin-e Khalq’ (MEK) opposition group has no significant popular support inside Iran. To the extent that Iranian respondents are familiar with the MEK they express severe dislike for this group, primarily due to its alliance with Saddam Hussein during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war. Many Iranian respondents believe that any indication of USG support for the MEK would seriously harm USG popularity among ordinary Iranians, even among those Iranians who oppose the current Iranian government, would fuel anti-American sentiment, and would likely empower Iranian hardliners.

In speaking to hundreds of Iranians both in the preceding two months and before, ordinary Iranians were almost uniformly dismissive of the MEK, reacting with either disdain or apathy, their responses strongly indicating a lack of any significant popular support for the MEK among Iranians living in Iran,” the cable states.

The cable then quotes some ordinary Iranians as having told US diplomats their hatred of the MKO, followed by the comments from political analysts whom were Iranian by birth.

“Without exception these analysts said that the MEK lacked any significant popular support inside Iran, with Iranian popular reactions to the MEK varying from rank ignorance (mostly among the young) to extreme aversion (to those more familiar with their history).”



## Behind the Mujahideen-e-Khalq

The Australian Parliamentary Library provides the Parliament of Australia with information, analysis and advice. In a research note on June 16, 2003, Nigel Brew, Director of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security section crafted a report on the MKO, which is as follows:

### Behind the Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MeK)

#### Introduction

Raids conducted by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) in June 2003 on the homes of Iranian Australians reportedly suspected of involvement with the Iranian opposition group, the MeK, have raised questions about the justification for such action, particularly as the MeK is not a proscribed organisation in Australia.

The MeK is the largest of the Iranian opposition groups, and is sometimes referred to as the Mujahideen-e-Khalq Organisation (MKO), or The People's Mujahideen Organisation of Iran (PMOI). The group also maintains a military wing in Iraq, known as the National Liberation Army (NLA).

#### Background

The MeK was formed in the mid-1960s as a splinter group of the Liberation Movement of Iran. The MeK's philosophy mixes Marxist and Islamic principles, and its primary objective is to overthrow and replace the Iranian Government with its own secularist administration.

In the early 1970s, the MeK fought an armed struggle against the Shah, whose Government the MeK viewed as a puppet regime of the US.

During the 1970s, the MeK was accused of conducting several assassinations of US military personnel and civilians working in Iran, and of actively supporting the takeover of the US Embassy in Tehran in 1979. That same year, the MeK helped to overthrow the Shah and install the new Shiite regime led by the Ayatollah Khomeini.

After being driven out of Iran, the MeK resettled in Paris. Having supported Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War, the MeK moved most of its operations there in 1987, whereupon the NLA was formed.

At the end of the Gulf War in 1991, the MeK was alleged to have assisted the Iraqi Republican Guard in suppressing Shiite and Kurdish uprisings, although this has always



been denied by the MeK.

The US designated the MeK as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) in 1997, on the basis that it kills civilians. Although civilians have died as a result of MeK operations, the mass indiscriminate killing associated with some terrorist groups does not appear to have ever been the MeK's objective or favoured tactic.

The MeK has now lost three appeals (1999, 2001 and 2003) to the US Government to be removed from the list of FTOs, and its terrorist status was reaffirmed each time. The MeK has continued to protest worldwide against its listing, with the overt support of some US political figures.

In the lead-up to the 2003 war in Iraq, it was suggested the MeK's camps in Iraq were likely hiding places for components of the Iraqi illegal weapons programmes and that the MeK/NLA might be used to defend Iraqi cities against a US-led attack.

Following initial US bombing of MeK bases in Iraq, the US apparently negotiated with the MeK forces to stop bombing MeK bases provided the MeK did not attack US troops. Apart from the obvious short-term benefit of securing protection from an armed rebel group allied with the Iraqi regime, the long-term objective of the US Government is believed to have been an attempt to preserve the only major armed opposition to the Iranian regime.

### Activities and Tactics

The MeK's attacks have largely been conducted within Iran against the Iranian Government. Most of its activities overseas, including Australia, are limited to political demonstrations, publicity campaigns and fundraising, rather than acts of terrorism.

The notable exception is the simultaneous attacks conducted by the MeK in April 1992 on Iranian embassies in eleven countries, in retaliation for the bombing of MeK bases in Iraq by the Iranian Air Force just days earlier. The Iranian Embassy in Canberra was over-run and some staff were seriously injured.

The attacks abruptly highlighted the MeK's ability to coordinate a global campaign of violence in a short space of time, and once again thrust the MeK onto the world stage. The sudden violence of the 1992 attacks may have dented the MeK's image as 'freedom fighters', and possibly convinced people that the MeK was indeed a terrorist organisation.

Indeed, such activities clearly fall within the definition of 'politically motivated violence' as used by ASIO, and would now also constitute a terrorist act under the Criminal Code Act 1995.



Germany's Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) has noted that the MeK's publicity campaigns often include attempts to contact members of parliament (MPs) to inform them of the MeK's goals, encourage political support, and influence parliamentary debate about Iran. Similar petitioning of Australian MPs has also been known to occur.

Whilst the MeK is not considered capable of overthrowing the Iranian Government on its own, and is believed to have lost much of its popular support within Iran since siding with Iraq, it has continued to demonstrate its ability to conduct assassinations, sabotage and other attacks in Iran. As such, the MeK remains a serious threat to Iranian officials, the group's main targets.

### Membership and Leadership

The MeK claims to have a 30 000 – 50 000 strong armed guerrilla force, based in Iraq, but a membership of between 15 000 – 20 000 is considered more likely. MeK supporters exist worldwide.

The principal leader of the MeK, and President-in-exile, is a woman called Maryam Rajavi (whose official website is located at <http://www.iran-e-azad.org/english/president.html>). Another woman, Moshgan Parsaii, is Secretary-General of the organisation. Maryam's husband, Massoud, is said to be in charge of the military wing, a third of which are believed to be women.

### Political Representation

The MeK is the dominant member of the political coalition of Iranian opposition groups known as the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), which considers itself to be a Government-in-exile, and is also led by Massoud Rajavi.

Formed in 1981, the NCRI has offices in Europe and Washington, where it enjoys limited US political support. The NCRI's vision for Iran is a secularist Government which supports gender equality, political pluralism and the separation of church and State.

It is currently illegal in Australia to fund or resource the NCRI.

### Funding and Support

The MeK claims to be supported from both within Iran and overseas. Massoud Rajavi claimed in a 1994 interview that donations that year alone had amounted to US\$45 million.

The MeK is also known to operate behind Iranian expatriate or refugee organisations to collect funds for the MeK. Seven Iranians were arrested in 2001 in the US after US\$400 000 was found to have been transferred to a MeK front organisation in the



United Arab Emirates, which the FBI claims was ultimately used to buy weapons.

### Current Status of the MeK

The MeK is a banned terrorist organisation in both the UK and the US. The European Union listed the MeK as a terrorist group in May 2002.

The MeK is currently not listed as a terrorist organisation in Australia or Canada. The MeK is also not on the UN's list of terrorist organisations, additions to which must have a demonstrated link with the Taliban and/or al-Qaeda in order to qualify.

However, the MeK does appear on Australia's list of entities, the assets of which must be frozen. This means that since late 2001 it has been a criminal offence in Australia under the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations Act 1945 and the Charter of the United Nations (Terrorism and Dealings with Assets) Regulations 2002, to fund or resource the group. Together, this legislation ratifies Australia's obligation under UN Security Council Resolution 1373 to suppress the financing of terrorism.

The exact reasons for the recent AFP raids on MeK supporters have not been disclosed. Perhaps the fact that reports did not mention any involvement by ASIO in the raids, suggests the matter is of a criminal, rather than security-related nature.

As funding the MeK is illegal, the raids were presumably conducted on this basis, particularly as those raided said the police asked if they had sent money overseas. It has been suggested, however, that the sudden move against the MeK has more to do with a recently signed Memorandum of Understanding with Iran and a visit to Australia by an Iranian delegation in the weeks preceding the raids, than actually investigating possible terrorism. However, the Government has denied the raids were politically motivated.

It is possible the Government is preparing to ban the MeK in Australia under the new Criminal Code Amendment (Terrorist Organisations) Bill 2003, which, if passed, will enable Australia to proscribe groups such as the MeK in the absence of any UN listing.

Despite the MeK's violent track record, it does not appear to pose a present or prospective threat to Australia, and it might therefore be difficult to obtain bipartisan support for its categorisation in Australia as a terrorist organisation.

● Nigel Brew, "Behind the Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MeK)", Parliament of Australia, June 16, 2003; available at [http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/10N96/upload\\_bina-ry/10n967.pdf;fileType=application/pdf#search=%22library/prspub/10N96%22](http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/10N96/upload_bina-ry/10n967.pdf;fileType=application/pdf#search=%22library/prspub/10N96%22)



## MKO Listed as a Terrorist Entity on Reasonable Grounds

On October 31, 2012 the Australian Associated Press published a report titled 'Iranian terrorist group demands delisting' in which the AAP quoted the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as saying: the MEK was listed because it satisfied, on reasonable grounds, the definition that it was either "a person who commits, or attempts to commit, terrorist acts or participates in or facilitates the commission of terrorist acts; an entity owned or controlled directly or indirectly by such persons; or a person or an entity acting on behalf of, or at the direction of such persons and entities."

● Martin Silk, "Iranian terrorist group demands delisting," Australian Associated Press, October 31, 2012; available at <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/breaking-news/iranian-terrorist-group-demands-delisting/story-fn3dxiwe-1226507722652>

## Australia Froze MKO's Assets



In December 2001 the Australian Government effectively froze the MKO's assets and made it an offence to fund MKO by adding the group to the Government's 'Consolidated List'—where it currently still remains. This means that since late 2001 it has been a criminal offence in Australia under the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations Act 1945 and the Charter of the United Nations (Terrorism and Dealings with Assets) Regulations 2002, to fund or resource the MKO.

● Nigel Brew, "Delisting the Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MeK)," December 5, 2012, available at [http://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/Flag-Post/2012/December/Delisting\\_the\\_MujahideeneKhalq\\_MeK](http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Flag-Post/2012/December/Delisting_the_MujahideeneKhalq_MeK)



## | IPS Profile of MKO |

**R**ight Web is a program of the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) that assesses the work of prominent organizations and individuals—both in and out of government—who promote militarist U.S. foreign and defense policies, with a special focus on the “war on terror” and the Middle East. It provides documented profiles, and claims that “reporters, researchers, and analysts have come to rely on Right Web for its well-documented research and analysis.”

Following is the profile of MKO at the Right Web website:

### People’s Mujahedin of Iran (MEK)

The People’s Mujahedin of Iran (Mojahedin-e Khalq-e Iran, or MEK) is an Islamic- and Marxist-inspired militant organization that advocates the overthrow of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The group was founded in 1963 as an armed guerrilla group after the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi violently suppressed opposition to his regime.

Over the years, the group developed a track record of violent opposition to the Iranian regime—both against the monarchy and the Islamic government that succeeded it—and countries deemed supportive of it, including at one time the United States. For years, the group was considered a proscribed terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department. But on the heels of an aggressive and well-funded lobbying campaign supported by a bipartisan cast of high-profile former public officials, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced in September 2012 that she was removing the group from the State Department’s list of foreign terrorist organizations, where the MEK had been listed since 1997.

The group’s origins are eccentric and its history tumultuous. According to the U.S. State Department, “The group participated in the 1979 Islamic Revolution that



replaced the Shah with a Shiite Islamist regime led by Ayatollah Khomeini. However, the MEK's ideology—a blend of Marxism, feminism, and Islamism—was at odds with the post-revolutionary government, and its original leadership was soon executed by the Khomeini regime. In 1981, the group was driven from its bases on the Iran-Iraq border and resettled in Paris, where it began supporting Iraq in its eight-year war against Khomeini's Iran. In 1986, after France recognized the Iranian regime, the MEK moved its headquarters to Iraq, which facilitated its terrorist activities in Iran. Since 2003, roughly 3,400 MEK members have been encamped at Camp Ashraf in Iraq."

As of late 2012, most of the residents of Camp Ashraf had been relocated to another facility in Iraq to await resettlement in third countries. The MEK's cooperation in the relocation—which had previously sparked concerns of a planned mass suicide by group members resistant to the move—was reportedly a key factor in Clinton's decision to delist the group.

Because of the MEK's cult-like organization under leader Maryam Rajavi, its support for Iraq in the Iran-Iraq War, and its participation in Saddam Hussein's crackdowns on Iraqi Shiites and Kurds, the group has been described by the New York Times as "a repressive cult despised by most Iranians and Iraqis."

U.S. officials have recognized this reputation. "While they present themselves as a legitimate democratic group worthy of support, there is universal belief in the administration that they are a cult," one official told CNN after the decision was made to delist the group. "A de-listing is a sign of support or amnesia on our part as to what they have done and it does not mean we have suddenly changed our mind about their current behavior. We don't forget who they were and we don't think they are now who they claim to be, which is alternative to the current regime."

Despite its murky reputation, MEK has presented itself to western backers as a popular and democratic Iranian opposition group that could lead the Islamic Republic to democracy—often even referring to Rajavi, who lives in exile in Paris and has never run for office in Iran, as the country's "president-elect."

Indeed, there have been reports that the United States has directly aided the MEK in the past, providing assistance that would have been illegal given the group's



terrorist designation. In April 2012, for example, journalist Seymour Hersh reported that U.S. special forces had provided communications and weapons training to MEK members in the Nevada desert sometime from 2005 to 2007, considerably improving the group's capabilities. "The MEK was a total joke," a Pentagon consultant told Hersh, "and now it's a real network inside Iran. How did the MEK get so much more efficient? Part of it is the training in Nevada. Part of it is logistical support in Kurdistan, and part of it is inside Iran. MEK now has a capacity for efficient operations that it never had before."

Some analysts warned that the U.S. decision to delist the MEK could cause U.S.-Iranian relations to deteriorate even further. "The decision will no doubt make the Iranian leadership even more distrustful of U.S. intentions regarding the future of Iran, particularly given the congressional support for the MEK to spearhead regime change," wrote Iran expert Farideh Farhi. "Less trust will make compromise less likely, presumably a preferred outcome for the high profile supporters of the MEK in Congress and elsewhere."

#### Divisive Impact on U.S. Politics

The MEK has had a divisive impact in the United States. While it has garnered supporters from across the U.S. political landscape, it has also spurred negative reactions from representatives of nearly all political factions. Neoconservatives are a case in point. Several high-profile neocons outlets have praised the group, arguing that it could serve to spearhead regime change efforts in Iran.

After news agencies reported in early 2012 that the MEK—with support from Israel—was involved in the assassination of Iranian scientists, a number of neoconservative mouthpieces hailed the group. The Rupert Murdoch-owned New York Post ran an editorial stating: "Were the MEK to play the critical role in derailing an Iranian bomb, it would be far more deserving of a Nobel Peace Prize than a certain president of the United States we could mention."

Similarly minded ideologues—like Raymond Tanter, a member of the Committee on the President Danger—have called the MEK "the best source for intelligence on Iran's potential violations of the nonproliferation regime," arguing that delisting the group



“would allow regime change to be on the table in Tehran.” At a rally for the group in Paris, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani proclaimed, “Appeasement of dictators leads to war, destruction and the loss of human lives. For your organization to be described as a terrorist organization is just really a disgrace.”

On the other hand, many neoconservatives view the group with antipathy, largely because they think that an alliance with it is short-sighted with respect to the goal of achieving regime change in Iran. An example is Michael Rubin, who has been sharply critical of MEK supporters. Responding to the news about the MEK’s alleged role in assassinating Iranian scientists, Rubin wrote: “By utilizing the MEK—a group which Iranians view in the same way Americans see John Walker Lindh, the American convicted of aiding the Taliban—the Israelis risk winning some short-term gain at the tremendous expense of rallying Iranians around the regime’s flag. A far better strategy would be to facilitate regime change. Not only would the MEK be incapable of that mission, but involving them even cursorily would set the goal back years.”

### Lobbying Campaign

Organizations sympathetic to MEK garnered an impressive array of establishment supporters inside Washington to speak in favor of delisting the group. The effort, according to the New York Times, “won the support of two former C.I.A. directors, R. James Woolsey and Porter J. Goss; a former F.B.I. director, Louis J. Freeh; a former attorney general, Michael B. Mukasey; President George W. Bush’s first homeland security chief, Tom Ridge; President Obama’s first national security adviser, Gen. James L. Jones; big-name Republicans like the former New York mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and Democrats like the former Vermont governor Howard Dean; and even the former top counterterrorism official of the State Department, Dell L. Dailey.” Mitchell Reiss, a top foreign policy advisor to Mitt Romney/Paul Ryan presidential campaign, also spoke on behalf of the group.

A potential explanation for this diverse list of supporters is the large speaking fees the MEK network has offered to big-name public figures. “Your speech agent calls, and says you get \$20,000 to speak for 20 minutes,” said a State Department official quoted by the Christian Science Monitor. “They will send a private jet, you get \$25,000



more when you are done, and they will send a team to brief you on what to say.” Pro-MEK individuals and organizations also reportedly donated thousands of dollars to the campaigns of several sitting members of Congress, including Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Bob Filner, Ted Poe, Mike Rogers, and Dana Rohrabacher.

Underlying MEK’s more mainstream backing has been a bedrock of support from foreign policy hawks. In addition to Woolsey and other former Bush administration officials, the group has enjoyed the avid backing of Iran hawks like former ambassador John Bolton and groups like the Iran Policy Committee (IPC), a right-wing U.S.-based outfit whose putative goal is “empowering Iranians for regime change.”

In a 2005 policy paper, IPC placed the delisting of MEK at the forefront of its proposals for U.S. policy toward Iran. The “continued designation since 1997 of the main Iranian opposition group, Mujahedeen e-Khalq (MEK), as a foreign terrorist organization by the State Department assures Tehran that regime change is off the table,” wrote the report’s authors. “Removing the MEK’s terrorist designation would be a tangible signal to Tehran and to the Iranian people that a new option is implicitly on the table—regime change.”

MEK’s critics have likened the organization’s advocacy campaign to that of the Iraqi National Congress (INC), an Iraqi exile group led by Ahmed Chalabi that worked to drum up U.S. support for an invasion of Iraq in the 1990s and early 2000s. By presenting itself to Western supporters as an Iraqi government-in-waiting, INC enabled Iraq hawks in the United States to claim that there was Iraqi support for the U.S. action. For Iran hawks, write Ali Fatemi and Karim Pakravan of the National Iranian American Council, “Maryam Rajavi, the MEK leader and self-proclaimed president of Iran, is their new Chalabi.”

IPC in particular has embodied the link between pro-MEK groups and pro-INC groups. A 2010 investigation by the U.S. foreign policy blog LobeLog found that “through 2006, IPC shared an address, accountants, and some staff with multiple organizations that either fronted for or had direct ties to the INC, even sharing staff members with those groups. Some of those ties have continued through today.”

History Founded in 1963, MEK was one of the many Iranian factions that supported the



overthrow of the shah in 1979. However, according to a report by the Christian Science Monitor, it was the only one that used violence against Americans in the run-up to the revolution, launching a string of assassinations and attacks against American military and diplomatic officers in Iran in the 1970s.

The group was expelled from Iran in 1981 when it fell out of favor with Ayatollah Khomeini in a post-revolutionary power struggle. Since then, it has launched thousands of attacks against Iranians it has deemed “agents of the regime,” peaking at a rate of three assassinations per day in the 1980s, and staged high-profile raids on Iranian diplomatic offices all over the world—including an orchestrated set of attacks on 12 diplomatic facilities in 10 countries on a single day in 1992.

In the mid-1980s, MEK settled in Iraq as a guest of Saddam Hussein, who offered the group use of Camp Ashraf, an encampment and army base north of Baghdad. There, not only did MEK fight on the Iraqi side of the Iran-Iraq war, but it also helped Saddam crush the CIA-instigated Iraqi Kurdish and Shiite uprisings that came on the tail of the 1991 Gulf War, leading to the precipitous erosion of its support in Iran and Iraq alike.

MEK’s fighters at Ashraf were disarmed by the United States following the fall of Saddam’s government in 2003. In the following years, the camp was subject to occasionally violent raids by the new Iraqi government, which sparked concerns about further violence or a humanitarian crisis when it ordered the camp closed by the end of 2011. Although the Ashraf issue is separate from the issue of MEK’s status as a terrorist organization, MEK’s backers in the West used the conditions at the camp to garner sympathy for the group’s broader agenda in Washington and to argue that its continued listing as a terrorist group is the cause of its mistreatment.

MEK’s lobbying efforts were foreshadowed in a 1994 report by the U.S. State Department, which concluded that the group was unlikely to be serious about its democratic overtures. According to the Christian Science Monitor: “Noting the MEK’s ‘dedication to armed struggle’; the ‘fact that they deny or distort sections of their history, such as the use of violence’; the ‘dictatorial methods’ of their leadership; and the ‘cult-like behavior of its members,’ the State Dept. concluded that the MEK’s ‘29-year record of behavior does not substantiate its capability or intention to be democratic.’ “That report describes tactics that foreshadow the MEK’s lobbying campaign today, 16 years



later. It notes a ‘formidable Mojahidin outreach program,’ which ‘solicits the support of prominent public figures,’ and the ‘common practice ... to collect statements issued by prominent individuals.’”

The group formally renounced the use of violence in 2001, but an FBI investigation found MEK members to be “actively involved in planning and executing acts of terrorism” as recently as 2004. In February 2012, NBC News reported that the Israeli government had coordinated with MEK to launch a series of assassinations against Iranian nuclear scientists. The group’s delisting may open the door to future cooperation with the United States as well.

• Right Web, “People’s Mujahedin of Iran (MEK),” October 8, 2012; available at [http://rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/peoples\\_muhajedin\\_of\\_iran\\_mek](http://rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/peoples_muhajedin_of_iran_mek)





## | MKO on Canada's Terror List |

**M**KO had been on the Canadian Criminal Code list of terrorist organizations for 17 years. It was first listed in Canada on May 24, 2005 and it was redesignated every 2 years. Following the lead of the US and the EU, Canada dropped the MKO from its official list of terrorists.

Canada's ministry of public safety is the formal decision maker on whether a group is qualified to be on the Canadian Criminal Code list of terrorist entities. As the Canadian minister of Public Safety has said, "The list of terrorist entities sends a strong message that Canada will not tolerate terrorist activities, including terrorist financing, or those who support such activities". Following is the report on MKO published by the Public Safety Canada.

Mujahedin e Khalq (MEK)

Also known as

Sāzimān-I Mujāhidin-I Khalq-I Irān (Holy Warrior Organization of the Iranian People)



/ Sazman-I Mojahedin-I Khalq-I Iran (Organization of the Freedom Fighters of the Iranian People) / Sazeman-e Mojahedin-e Khalq-e Iran (Organization of People's Holy Warriors of Iran) / Sazeman-e-Mujahideen-e-Khalq-e-Iran, Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK), Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO), Mujahiddin e Khahq, al-Khalq Mujahideen Organization, Mujahedeen Khalq, Modjaheddins khalq, Moudjahiddin-é Khalq, National Liberation Army of Iran (NLA) (the military wing of the MEK) / Armée de Libération nationale iranienne (ALNI) and People's Mujahidin Organization of Iran (PMOI) / People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI) / Organisation des moudjahiddin du peuple d'Iran (OMPI) / Organisation des moudjahidines du peuple

## Description

Formed in the 1960s, the Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK) is an Iranian terrorist organization based mostly in Iraq, where it received financial support from Saddam Hussein's regime. Following the second Gulf war, MEK members were relocated to one camp in Iraq. MEK also has membership in Europe and North America. MEK's principal objective is the overthrow of the existing Iranian regime to replace it with a democratic and secular government. MEK plans to install the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), a political coalition of Iranian opposition groups affiliated with MEK, as interim administration and leader Maryam Rajavi as president. To achieve their objectives, MEK's past activities have included assassinations, armed attacks, hostage-taking, mortar attacks and hit-and-run raids against government and military personnel and infrastructure.

## Date listed

24 May, 2005

## Date reviewed

22 December, 2010

● Public Safety Canada, "Currently listed entities," August 8, 2012; available at [http://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2alpha/alpha-eng.html?lang=eng&i=1&index=enr&srchtxt=secular&where=%28vpen\\_advanced%20inc%20%27secular%27%20%29&dom=RGE](http://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2alpha/alpha-eng.html?lang=eng&i=1&index=enr&srchtxt=secular&where=%28vpen_advanced%20inc%20%27secular%27%20%29&dom=RGE)



## Canadian Security Intelligence Service Report on MKO



Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) is Canada's primary national intelligence service which is at the forefront of Canada's national security establishment. CSIS is in charge of investigating threats, analyzing information and producing intelligence. It then reports to, and advises, the Government of Canada to protect the country and its citizens. CSIS report on the MKO is as follows:

The Mujahedin-e-Khalq  
(MEK or MKO)

1. The Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK) is a militant, Marxist, Islamic movement comprised mainly of expatriate Iranians dedicated to the violent overthrow of the present Iranian government.

### Background

2. The MEK was founded secretly in 1965 by young, former members of the Liberation Movement who felt that their leaders were too moderate vis-à-vis the West. The MEK stressed the importance of religion, believing that Shia Islam would play a major role in inspiring the masses to join the revolution against the Shah.

3. The founding leaders of the MEK were Mohammad Hanifnejad, Said Mohsen, and Ali-Asghar Badizadegan. They had been members of the Liberation Movement of Iran (aka Mehdi Bazargan Nahzat-I Azadi-yi Iran), but after a bloody demonstration in June 1963 they found their parent party too moderate and too wedded to conventional politics.

4. The MEK was born out of the struggle against the United States and West-



ernization which sparked the Iranian revolution. The MEK developed an eclectic ideological blend of Islam and Marxism that dedicated both a war of armed struggle and a war of propaganda to achieve political power. Its avowed goal was to replace the Islamic Republic with a Democratic Islamic Republic but the MEK's 29-year record of behavior does not substantiate its capability or intention to be democratic. In the 1970's the MEK concluded that violence was the only way to bring about change in Iran. The founders were also deeply impressed by contemporary guerilla movements, especially in Cuba, Vietnam and Algeria.

5. During this period, the MEK staged terrorist attacks inside Iran and collaborated with the Ayatollah Khomeini to destabilize and overthrow the Shah's regime. The MEK was the largest, best disciplined and most heavily armed of all the opposition organizations during the revolution and has remained the most active armed Iranian dissident group. The MEK central committee leadership spent much of the 1970's in prison as a result of MEK terrorist actions undertaken in Iran in August of 1971.

6. The MEK suffered a major schism in 1975, with both factions carrying out guerrilla actions; the Marxists were soliciting support from the working class and the MEK were targeting students. The MEK was considered the major opposition to the Shah but this schism so weakened the organization that it paved the way for Khomeini to come to power.

7. Yielding to popular pressure in 1977-78 the government freed most MEK prisoners. After his release in December of 1978, from a near seven year prison sentence, Massoud Rajavi officially took over the leadership of the MEK. During his time in Qasr prison Rajavi had established his authority and indoctrinated recruits. Qasr was the seedbed for the cult of personality that was to grow around Rajavi. Those rejecting this cult were pushed aside and many supporters from the tightly knit prison network were promoted by Rajavi to the top echelons of the MEK organization after the revolution.

8. In 1979, the same day that 400 university students overtook the US embassy in Tehran, the MEK issued a proclamation headlined, "After the Shah, it's America's turn". Following the seizure of the embassy, the MEK participated physically at the site, assisting in holding and defending the embassy against liberation. They also offered political support for the hostage-keeping and opposed the release of the



hostages. After 444 days of captivity, the hostages were released in January 1981. The MEK quickly published that they were the first force to unequivocally support the occupation of the American embassy.

9. The MEK lost its political influence to the Khomeini regime, becoming the target of a rigorous government campaign against all opposition after Bani-Sadr was ousted as President of Iran in June 1981. On 19 June 1981, the MEK and Bani-Sadr called upon the whole nation to take over the streets the following day, June 20, to express their opposition to the Islamic Republic Party (IRP), which they believed engineered Bani-Sadr's downfall. Rajavi and Bani-Sadr fled to France shortly after this incident and there established their political headquarters/government-in-exile. The MEK then began their reign of revolutionary terror, launching a violent and polemical cycle of attack and reprisal. By the autumn of 1981, the MEK were carrying out daily attacks, assassinations, ambushes, bombings and suicide attacks.

10. After fleeing Iran in 1981, Rajavi helped found the National Council of Resistance (NCR) headquartered in France. Rajavi was later exiled from France in 1986 and fled to Iraq, where he established and ran the National Liberation Army. Maryam Rajavi (massoud Rajavi's wife) acted as Secretary General of the MEK and as Deputy Commander in Chief of the National Liberation Army until August of 1993. She was then elected President-in-exile of Iran, intending to rule during the transitional period, between the fall of the current regime and the election of a new President.

## IDEOLOGY

11. There was a major shift in the MEK's ideology during the early 80's, one away from its original anti-western sentiment towards a courting of the West to support its' overthrow of the present Iranian government. The MEK has also evolved into a form of cult, strongly devoted to its chief, Rajavi. The organization has granted unlimited powers to Rajavi. He has resolved that the ultimate objective is revolution in Iran and that the ends justify the means. Internally, Rajavi runs the MEK autocratically, suppressing dissent and rejecting differing viewpoints.

## PROPAGANDA

12. The MEK has established an effective propaganda unit which attempts to legitimize the MEK's efforts in international eyes. This unit's main function is to



establish the MEK as the alternative to the current Iranian regime and in so doing gain both new adherents and Western political and financial support. The National Council of Resistance (NCR) is the active distributor of external propaganda and the NCR uses this propaganda when lobbying foreign governments for support. The MEK also use internal propaganda as part of their indoctrination process, for example the NCR anthem which is chanted during military training includes the phrases, Iran is Rajavi, Rajavi is Iran. Iran is Maryam, Maryam is Iran. This internal propaganda has served to foster a cult-like atmosphere as many MEK members revere the Rajavis like gods.

13. The use of the Internet is also an important tool for marketing the propaganda of the MEK. The MEK has a home page on the Internet. The MEK also disseminates its propaganda through broadcasts on various satellite radio stations from Iraq, and via a TV programme in Persian which is transmitted daily by Iraqi TV.

## Support

### Internationally

14. The only government that supports the MEK politically and financially is the totalitarian regime of Saddam Hussein. Beyond support from Iraq, the MEK uses front organizations to solicit contributions from expatriate Iranian communities and uses companies run by the MEK in various countries to generate revenue. Other known supporters are: AMAL; several Palestinian factions including al-Fatah and the PLO; and Jordan. In June of 1995, Maryam Rajavi was refused entry into Germany by the Foreign Ministry because she propagated the violent overthrow of the Tehran government. The Clinton administration has refused to deal with the MEK and on October 8, 1997, under new anti-terrorism legislation, designated the MEK a terrorist organization.

### Within Iran

15. Although it remains a significant force in exile, the MEK has alienated much of its support base within Iran through its open alliance with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein –especially during the Iran-Iraq War. This lack of popular support does not lend credibility to the MEK's insistence that it is a viable political alternative to the present Iranian government.



## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

### Methods of Operation

16. The MEK directs a worldwide campaign against the Iranian Government that stresses the use of propaganda and uses violence. MEK methods of operation include: assassinations, bombings, hijackings, ambushes, suicide attacks, border raids, street demonstrations and propaganda.

### Targets

17. The MEK primarily targets Iranian government officials, buildings and interests abroad. Although the MEK supported the take-over of the American Embassy in Iran in 1979 and has admitted to the murder of at least six Americans, it now favours cooperation with the United States. However, possible repercussions may be directed towards the US, Britain and France for perceived inaction with respect to Iranian air force missile and bombing attacks against MEK and Iranian Kurdish bases in Iraq. Increasing economic relations between Western European nations, such as Germany and France, and Iran is also becoming a point of increased friction.

### Current Organization

#### International Locations

18. To conduct its propaganda campaign the group has established offices throughout western Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia and the Middle East. The MEK's European political headquarters is located in Auvers-sur-Oise, France. Globally, there are 13 large, and 170 small representations. They are responsible for coordinating the public relations effort and through their activities have established the MEK as the best organized Iranian opposition group.

#### Relationship with

##### a) National Council of Resistance

19. The NCR is a Paris-based umbrella group with a total of 235 members; made up of various Iranian resistance groups and 6 other organizations, including 229 political representatives. The council is headed by Massoud Rajavi, and the majority of members are also members of the MEK or the National Liberation Army. The



council has 10 offices in the United States and others around the world.

#### b)National Liberation Army of Iran

20. The NLA was established in Iraq by Massoud Rajavi (current army head) in 1987 with assistance from Saddam Hussein. The NLA aims to overthrow the Islamist government in Tehran and its fighters frequently launch cross-border attacks from Iraq. It has five large bases and several small ones in the middle sector of the Iran-Iraq war. The NLA's day-to-day combat strength is about 5,000 men and women. The NLA's headquarters is at Camp Ashraf near Baghdad.

#### MEK IN CANADA

21. On April 5, 1992, approximately 40 people wielding sticks, crowbars and mallets attacked the Iranian Embassy in Ottawa, injuring several people. Most of the attackers were members of the MEK and were protesting an Iranian air attack on an MEK base inside Iraq, illustrating the high level of organization and commitment of the MEK within Canada. As well as the attack in Canada, a group of near-simultaneous attacks were carried out on Iranian Embassies in 13 different countries including: Australia, France, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, and the Iranian mission to the United Nations in New York.

22. On March 26, 1993, Robab Farahi-Mahdavi, a leading female member of the MEK and allegedly the mastermind behind the embassy attack, was deported to England. The Federal Court upheld a government decision that she was inadmissible to Canada pursuant to section 40(1) of the Immigration Act. Mahdavi's involvement with the MEK in Canada was deemed to have been substantial.



## CHRONOLOGY OF MEK ATTACKS

DATE	LOCATION	ATTACK
1971 08	Iran	Planned bombing of electrical plant in Tehran foiled.
1971 08	Iran	Planned kidnapping of Prince Shahram foiled.
1971	Iraq	Hijacked plane, rerouted from Jordan to Baghdad.
1972 05 16	Iran	Attack a police station.
1972 05 30	Iran	Bombing of Iran-American Society, US information Office, Hotel International, Pepsi Cola, General Motors, Marine Oil Company, and Reza Shah's mausoleum.
1972 05 30	Iran	Attempted assassination of the chief of the US Military Mission in Iran, General Harold Price.
1972 08 03	Iran	Bombing of Jordanian Embassy.
1972 08 13	Iran	Assassination of the chief of Tehran police, General Taheri.
1972 09	Iran	Bombing of the Imperial Club, the Civil Defense Organization Center, the Municipal Department Store, the Police Armoury in Qom, and the exhibition hall of the Department of Military Industries.
1973	Iran	Bombing of ten major buildings including, Plan Organization, Pan-American Airlines, Shell Oil, Hotel International, Radio City Cinema, and an export company owned by a Baha'i businessman.
1973 06 02	Iran	Assassination of American Lt. Colonel Lewis Hawkins.
1974 02	Iran	Attack on police station in Isfahan.
1974 04	Iran	Bombing of the Oman Bank, the British Embassy, and the Pan-American Oil Company.
1974 04 19	Iran	Attempted bombing of the SAVAK (Intelligence organization) centre at Tehran University.
1974 05 25	Iran	Bombings of three multi-national corporations.
1974 06	Iran	Bombing of gendarmerie post, five factories, offices of ITT and a large US company.
1975 03	Iran	Assassination of the Warden of Komiteh Prison.



1975 05 21	Iran	Assassination of two US military advisors, Col. Paul Schaeffer and Lt. Col. Jack Turner, and an Iranian airforce officer.
1976 08 28	Iran	Assassination of three American businessmen.
1979	Iran	Support for the attack and hostage-taking of the American Embassy.
1981 07 06	Iran	Assassination of the chief prosecutor of Gilan.
1981 08 04	Iran	Assassination of an Islamic Republican Party (IRP) leader.
1981 08 30	Iran	Bombing of a meeting of the Khomeini regime's National Security Council, killing the new president Ali Raja'i, and his new Prime Minister, Mohammad Javad Bahonar and three top security officers.
1981 09 11	Iran	Suicide bombing that killed 17 pasdars and the religious leader of Tabriz.
1981 09 29	Iran	Suicide bombing that killed an IRP leader in Khorasan.
1981 12 08	Iran	Suicide bombing that killed the religious leader of Shiraz.
1981 12 28	Iran	Assassination of a member of the Assembly of Experts and a court judge.
1982 02 26	Iran	Assassination of a member of the Central Komiteh.
1982 04 15	Iran	Assassination of the religious leader of Rasht.
1982 07 02	Iran	Suicide bombing that killed the religious leader of Yazd and 13 pasdars.
1982 10 15	Iran	Suicide bombing that killed the religious leader of Kerman-shah, the former revolutionary prosecutor of Hamadan.



1982	Iran	Assassinate Chief Prosecutor, Chief of Police, Prison warden, the Governor of Gilan, the Pasdar Commander of Tabriz, and the imam jom'ehs (religious leaders) of Tabriz, Shiraz, Rasht, Yazd, Kermanshah.
1983 07 06	Iran	Hijacking of Iranian airliner with 372 passengers and 18 crew.
1984 09 12	Iran	Attempted hijacking of an Iran Air flight. One person killed, three wounded.
1992 04 05	Canada	Aproximately 35 individuals attacked the Iranian embassy in Ottawa.
1992 04 05	Switzerland	Iranian embassy attacked.
1992 04 05	United States	Iranian mission to the United Nations in New York attacked by five members.
1992 04 05	Britain	Iranian embassy attacked.
1992 04 05	Australia	Iranian embassy attacked.
1992 04 05	France	Iranian embassy attacked.
1992 04 05	Norway	Demonstrators attack the Iranian Embassy.
1992 04 05	Denmark	Demonstrators attack the Iranian Embassy.
1992 04 05	Sweden	
1992 04 05	The Netherlands	Iranian embassy attacked.
1993 12	Iraq	Turkish diplomat is assassinated after being mistaken for Iranian official.
1994 11	Iran	Suspected in bombing in Tehran which kills three people.
1995 04	Iran	Suspected in bombing in Tehran which injures 13 people.

● Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/117544659/mek#download> also <http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/12/20/ottawa-drops-saddam-hussein-linked-iranian-group-from-terror-list-in-bid-to-ramp-up-pressure-against-tehran/>



## Congressional Research Service Report on MKO

**K**nown as the US Congress' think tank, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) provides policy and legal analysis to committees and Members of both the House and Senate, regardless of party affiliation.

According to its website, CRS is "well-known for analysis that is authoritative, confidential, objective and nonpartisan." Its highest priority is to ensure that Congress has 24/7 access to the nation's best thinking.

In May 24, 2012, CRS published a report titled Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses written by the Middle-Eastern affairs specialist Kenneth Katzman. The report provides an overview of the terrorist MKO group on pages 16-19.

### Exiled Opposition Groups: People's Mojahedin

Some groups have been committed to the replacement of the regime virtually since its inception, and have used, or are still using, violence to achieve their objectives. Their linkages to the Green Movement are tenuous, if present at all, and some indications suggest these movements want to dominate any coalition that might topple the regime.

One of the best-known exiled opposition groups is the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI). Secular and left-leaning, it was formed in the 1960s to try to overthrow the Shah of Iran and has been characterized by U.S. reports as attempting to blend several ideologies, including Marxism, feminism, and Islamism, although the organization denies that it ever advocated Marxism. It allied with pro-Khomeini forces during the Islamic revolution and, according to past State Department reports, supported the November 1979 takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, although the group claims that it is the regime that alleged this support in order to





discredit the group with the West. The group was driven into exile when it rose up against the Khomeini regime in September 1981. Even though it is an opponent of Tehran, since the late 1980s the State Department has refused contact with the PMOI and its umbrella organization, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI).

### The Question of “De-Listing” the PMOI

The State Department designated the PMOI as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) in October 1997 and the NCR was named as an alias of the PMOI in the October 1999 re-designation. In August 14, 2003, the State Department designated the NCR offices in the United States an alias of the PMOI, and NCR and the Justice Department closed down those offices.

The PMOI’s FTO designation has been widely debated for many years. The State Department’s annual reports on international terrorism, including the report for 2010 issued August 18, 2011, asserts that the organization—and not just a radical element of the organization as the group asserts—was responsible for the alleged killing of seven American military personnel and contract advisers to the former Shah in 1975-1976. The report also repeats allegations of the previous year’s report that the group is responsible for bombings at U.S. government facilities in Tehran in 1972 as a protest of the visit to Iran of then-President Richard Nixon. The State Department report also list as terrorist acts numerous attacks by the group against regime officials, facilities in Iran and abroad, and security officers, all prior to 2001. However, the report does not list any attacks by the group that purposely targets civilians—a key distinction that leads several experts to argue that the group should not be considered “terrorist.” The State Department report does not state that the group has, as of mid-2001, fulfilled pledges to end all use of violence inside Iran and that there are no reports that it has resumed those activities. The group’s alliance with Saddam Hussein’s regime in the 1980s and 1990s has contributed to the U.S. criticism of the organization.

In challenging its FTO decision, the PMOI also asserts that, by retaining the group on the FTO list, the United States is unfairly preventing the PMOI from participating in the opposition movement. The regime accuses the group of involvement in the post-June 2009 presidential election violence, and some of those tried for mohareb since February 2010 are members of the organization, according to statements by human rights groups such as Amnesty International.

It also points to recent legal successes in Europe as evidence that it should no



longer be considered an FTO. On January 27, 2009, the European Union (EU) removed the group from its terrorist group list; the group had been so designated by the EU in 2002. In May 2008, a British appeals court determined that the group should no longer be considered a terrorist organization on the grounds that the British government did not provide “any reliable evidence” that the PMOI would “resort to terrorist activities in the future.” Currently, the governments that still list the group as a “terrorist organization,” include the United States, Canada, and Australia. In June 2003, France arrested about 170 opposition activists, including Maryam Rajavi (wife of PMOI founder Masoud Rajavi, whose whereabouts are unknown), the “President-elect” of the NCRI.

She was released and remains based in France, and is frequently received by European parliamentarians and other politicians in Europe. On May 12, 2011, France dropped charges against Mrs. Rajavi and 23 other PMOI activists who remained under investigation, saying there was no evidence the PMOI conducted or backed violence against civilians, but only against regime personnel. Such action, in the view of the judges, constituted resistance, not terrorism.

As to the current state of consideration of the FTO listing, in July 2008, the PMOI petitioned to the State Department that its designation be revoked on the grounds that it renounced any use of terrorism in 2001. The State Department reaffirmed the listing in January 2009 and after a January 2010 review. On July 16, 2010, the Court of Appeals required the State Department to review the listing, ruling that the group had not been given proper opportunity to rebut allegations against it. At a May 5, 2011, House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, State Department Coordinator for Counterterrorism Daniel Benjamin said a decision would be made by the end of 2011, although that deadline passed. A sign of success in the group’s campaign came on February 29, 2012, when Secretary Clinton, at a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, stated that a “key factor” in the de-listing decision will be the group’s compliance with an agreement that its members leave Camp Ashraf, discussed below. That suggests that the department has determined that the group qualifies for removal on the technical issues of involvement in terrorism. However, the group continued to press in court for a decision to require the department de-listing decision requires careful review of a wide range of classified and other information. A Court of Appeals hearing was held on May 8, 2012, on the issue. Subsequently, press reports quoted unnamed Administration officials as saying the State Department is moving to remove the group from the list, most likely 60 days after the last Camp Ashraf residents relocate (see below). Some advocate that the



United States not only remove the group from the FTO list but also enter an alliance with the group.

In an effort to obtain a favorable de-listing decision, during 2010 and 2011 supporters of the organization have reportedly paid several former U.S. officials for panel appearances in which they supported de-listing the group. H.Res. 60, introduced January 26, 2011, “urges” the Secretary of State to remove the PMOI from the FTO list. It has nearly 100 co-sponsors.

### Camp Ashraf Issue

The issue of group members in Iraq is increasingly pressing. U.S. forces attacked PMOI military installations in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom (March 2003) and negotiated a ceasefire with PMOI military elements in Iraq, requiring the approximately 3,400 PMOI fighters to remain confined to their Ashraf camp near the border with Iran. Its weaponry was placed in storage, guarded first by U.S. and now by Iraqi personnel. Another 200 Ashraf residents took advantage of an arrangement between Iran and the ICRC for them to return to Iran if they disavow further PMOI activities; none is known to have been persecuted since returning.

In July 2004, the United States granted the Ashraf detainees “protected persons” status under the 4th Geneva Convention. However, that designation ended in June 2004 when Iraq formally reassumed full sovereignty from a U.S.-led occupation authority. The U.S.-led, U.N. supported security mandate in Iraq was replaced on January 1, 2009, by a bilateral U.S.-Iraq agreement that limits U.S. flexibility in Iraq. The group long feared that Iraqi control of the camp would lead to the expulsion of the group to Iran. The Iraqi government tried to calm those fears in January 2009 by saying that it would adhere to all international obligations not to do so, but that trust was reduced on July 28, 2009, when Iraq used force to overcome resident resistance to setting up a police post in the camp. Eleven residents of the camp were killed.

The PMOI’s fears for Ashraf residents heightened on July 1, 2010, when the Iraqi Security Forces assumed full physical control over Ashraf and the U.S. military post near the camp closed, although U.S. forces in Iraq continued to periodically visit the camp to monitor conditions and mentor Iraqi forces there. On April 2, 2011, with a U.S. military unit overseeing the rotation, the Iraqi government changed the Iraq Security Forces (ISF) brigade that guards Ashraf, triggering PMOI warnings that the troops might move against Ashraf residents. The U.S. unit departed on April 7 and clashes between the Iraqi force and camp residents took place on April 8; U.N. High



Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay largely confirmed PMOI claims that 35 Ashraf residents were killed and that Iraqi forces were at fault. The State Department issued a statement attributing the deaths to the actions of Iraq and its military, although noting that the U.S. government may not have had complete facts about what transpired.

After the clash, Iraqi officials reiterated their commitment to close Ashraf at the end of 2011 (following a full U.S. withdrawal from Iraq), but said such closing would be done in co-operation with the United Nations and other international organizations. On May 16, 2011, the United States offered to help relocate camp residents before Iraq closes it and, in early July 2011, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Jim Jeffrey called on the Ashraf residents to disband and seek refugee status elsewhere in Iraq as part of a solution. The U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) declared the residents “asylum seekers” and offered to assess each resident in an effort to resettle them elsewhere. The top U.N. envoy in Iraq, Martin Kobler, offered to mediate between the Ashraf residents and the Iraqi government and called on the Iraqi government to postpone its end of 2011 deadline to close the camp. On September 26, 2011, the EU named Belgian diplomat Jean De Ruyt as an adviser to EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton on the Ashraf issue.

The issue clouded the final withdrawal from Iraq, completed on December 18, 2011. Ambassador Daniel Fried, appointed in November 2011 as the Obama Administration’s coordinator on the Ashraf issue, testified on December 7, 2011, before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Foreign Affairs Committee; he said that the United States was pressing the Iraqi government for a humane, peaceful resolution of the Ashraf issue, while also blaming the Ashraf leadership for refusing any relocation plan other than en masse relocation outside Iraq as refugees. U.S. officials said that adequate food, fuel, and medical supplies were reaching camp residents, although supporters of the group continued to challenge that assertion.

In late December 2011, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki showed some flexibility by announcing that residents would have until as late as April 2012 to relocate. On December 25, 2011, the Iraqi government and the United Nations announced agreement to relocate the residents to former U.S. military base Camp Liberty, near Baghdad International Airport. The PMOI, which had demanded safeguards for their transfer, subsequently announced acceptance of the deal and the move to Camp Liberty (renamed Camp Hurriya). About 2,000 Ashraf residents have relocated as of mid-May 2012, and about 1,200 remain at Ashraf. PMOI supporters say that Camp



Liberty conditions are poor and insufficient for the 3,200 eventual residents—the accommodations consist of trailers left over from the U.S. military's use of the base. The PMOI supporters report a shortage of water and electricity, and claim that residents are suffering from a ban by the Iraqi government on the use of pesticides there. The Iraqi government is also reportedly forbidding remaining residents from selling their properties still at Ashraf.

The U.N. High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) is conducting refugee status determinations for all the residents after they relocate. As of late May 2012, a few hundred have been interviewed. Two have left Camp Liberty through their links to European countries, not through the resettlement process. As noted above, the Secretary of State has linked the PMOI's cooperation with the relocation to a decision to take the PMOI from the FTO list. In the aftermath of the April 8, 2011, clashes, H.Res. 231 was introduced, calling on the President to undertake "all necessary and appropriate steps" to ensure the safety and protection of the Ashraf residents. Another bill, H.Res. 332, introduced June 24, 2011, called for a congressional investigation of the incident.

● Kenneth Katzman "Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses," Congressional Research Service, May 24, 2012; available at <http://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=720768>

## | Canadian SIRC's Case Study on MKO |



**T**he Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC) is an independent, external review body which reports to the Parliament of Canada on the operations of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS or the Service). SIRC informs the Canada's Minister of Public Safety of its investigation findings on an ongoing basis, and produces an annual report that is tabled by the Minister in Parliament.

In its annual report in 1992, SIRC presents a case study



on the MKO's attack on the Iranian Embassy in Ottawa:

"At about 12:18 p.m. on April 5, 1992, some 40 individuals armed with crowbars, sledgehammers and a ladder attacked the Iranian embassy in Ottawa. Most were members of the Mujahedin-E-Khalq (MEK) and were protesting an Iranian air attack on the MEK base inside Iraq earlier that day. The Ottawa attack began three hours after an attack on the Iranian embassy in Bonn, Germany. It was also preceded by at least seven other attacks in Europe. Under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the host nation must protect embassies and diplomats."

One year later, in its 1992-93 report, the SIRC wrote:

"In early April 1993, the Vancouver Sun reported that the leader of the Mujahedin-E-Khalq (MEK) in Canada had been deported to Britain. After a Federal Court of Canada decision, an Adjudicator ordered her deportation pursuant to a National Security Certificate, stating that she [Maryam Rajavi] was an inadmissible person in Canada pursuant to paragraph 19(1)(g) of the Immigration Act. We reviewed whether CSIS provided a fair, balanced and complete picture of the information and intelligence it found in its investigations. We have no mandate to review the Court's decision to deport this person.

The Service believed that the individual should be deported for two reasons: as leader, she was responsible for all of MEK's activities in Canada; and she participated in planning the attack carried out by the MEK against the Iranian Embassy in Ottawa on April 5, 1992. We reviewed the Service's investigation and found that the advice submitted accurately described the threat to the security of Canada. We believe that CSIS performed its legal responsibilities appropriately."

● The Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC), Annual Report 1992-93, available at [www.sirc-csars.gc.ca/pdfs/ar\\_1992-1993-eng.pdf](http://www.sirc-csars.gc.ca/pdfs/ar_1992-1993-eng.pdf)

● The Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC), Annual Report 1991-92, available at [www.sirc-csars.gc.ca/pdfs/ar\\_1991-1992-eng.pdf](http://www.sirc-csars.gc.ca/pdfs/ar_1991-1992-eng.pdf)







## EU Cites Secret Evidence against MKO



**T**he EU officials told MKO lawyers in a letter on May 14, 2007 that they had secret evidence that justified “keeping Iran opposition group PMOI on its terrorist register but cannot reveal the content for security reasons, in a situation stoking anger among some MEPs.”

“The council [EU states secretariat] is not in a position to give you access to other documents in the file, since the state which provided the documents does not consent to their disclosure,” EU officials told PMOI lawyers in one of the series of documents exchanged between the EU and MKO.

“Otherwise the position of the EU in international cooperation in the fight against terrorism would be compromised,” the letter reads.



## German Secret Service Report Highlights MKO Terror Role



Germany's domestic intelligence agency (BfV) highlighted in its annual report in 2009 the MKO's numerous terror attacks inside Iran.

The German secret service which continues to monitor the MKO, stressed the Paris-based terror group was "responsible for scores

of attacks" inside Iran over the past three decades. The report pointed out the MKO was no longer capable of conducting terror assaults in Iran ever since the collapse of Iraq's dictator Saddam Hossein.

The report referred also to MKO's campaign in Europe to whitewash its brutal crimes by portraying itself as a "democratic Iranian opposition movement." It added the MKO had hired numerous people of non-Iranian origin, interested in visiting Paris, to attend a MKO rally in the French capital on June 17, 2008.



The MKO terrorist group had also paid extras for a demonstration in Brussels on March 8, 2007 in a bid to cover up the small number of protesters, according to German press reports. Around 60 Iranian actors and actresses who were not informed beforehand about the action, were paid the usual 50 euros per day fee to take part in the demonstration in Brussels where the MKO was protesting its blacklisting as a terror group by the European Union. The extras were hired by a German casting agency, named 'House of Extras', which transferred them via two buses from Cologne to Brussels. Most of the actors and actresses were duped into believing that the MKO demonstration was part of a movie and not a real event. Once the extras arrived at the scene of a demonstration they were shocked and most of them broke away from the other demonstrators.

Meanwhile, a representative of the German casting agency said extras were also hired for another MKO rally in New York in fall 2005. Jochen Cerff confirmed 50 actors and actresses were hired in Hamburg and Leipzig to take part in a New York rally in front of the UN building. The extras received reportedly a one-week complimentary trip to New York.

The MKO had also paid poor European-based immigrants from Africa and the Middle East, most of them social welfare recipients, to attend demonstrations in Berlin. Several of the paid African demonstrators were told by the MKO that they would go on a sightseeing trip to Berlin. The MKO has also been of massive social welfare fraud in Germany.

● Islamic Republic News Agency, "German secret service report highlights MKO terror role," May 19 2009; available at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/library/news/2009/intell-090519-irna01.htm>



## 2004 Report of the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution



# Bundesministerium des Innern

**T**he revolutionary Marxist Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization along with its armed wing, the National Liberation Army (NLA), in Iraq has been regarded as the most powerful Iranian opposition group before the fall of Saddam Hussein and has been responsible for severe terrorist attacks in Iran.

Due to the change in Iraq's situation, this Organization has reached a turning point. The Iraqi Interim Government asked some 3800 remaining members of the NLA who had been disarmed by the US army in May 2003 to leave the Iraqi soil. In late 2003 and early 2004, the NCR supporters staged peaceful demonstrations



almost everyday before the US embassies in Berlin, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, and Hamburg. The protests peaked in January 2 when some 500 NCR supporters gathered before the US embassy in Berlin.

The ultimatum of the Iraqi Interim Government to expel Mujahedin has been unanswered by the members of the Organization and the NLA, although the government has not taken any action against them. Meanwhile, the US has provided the members of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization with the Protected Persons status under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 which is about the protection of civilians at the time of war. The Mujahedin Organization has interpreted this issue that it has been wrongfully listed as a terrorist entity. Maryam Rajavi who is selected as the president-elect of Iran by the NCR, described the Geneva Convention as “a victory for resistance and Iranian people”. She added that enjoying this protection draws the “borderline between the legitimate and just resistance of Iranian people for freedom and democracy and terrorism, fundamentalism, and violence”.

#### Actions for being delisted as a terrorist entity

Other activities of the NCR were aimed to raise itself to the political scene. This organization tried to pose as an exiled pro-democracy and democratic movement. The purpose was delisting the organization as the foreign terrorist organization and creating a free atmosphere for its anti-Iran political activities in western countries. On September 13, some 5000 sympathizers of the NCR rallied before the European Parliament calling for being delisted from the EU list.

To solve its financial problems, the NCR has turned again to making money on the streets, halted since 2002. It uses such names as “Iranian Women’s Aid Society” in Hanufer and the “Association for the Rights of Iranian Refugees” in Düsseldorf in this way.



## 2005 report of the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution

The Authority of Protecting Germany's Constitution, in Bayern province, has published its newest annual report on its website. A part of this report reads as follows: "Mojahedin-e Khalq, among exiled Iranian opposition groups, has been isolated for years. Since they claim that they're the only democratic alternative for the current regime. But in fact the organization itself shows that it has critical democratic flaws. They are ready for violence. The evidence for this claim is the iron hierarchy which exists as a sect around the couple of Rajavi (Massoud and Maryam). Sympathizers and supporters collect money for the group by moving house to house and asking for help for so-called "in need human beings". Cover organization for helping Iranian refugees was dismantled in October 2003. But there are signs that there have been other associations, for example the association of Human Rights for Refugees. The members of this association are looking for the donors to the previous association. MKO and NCRI are still looking for politicians to take part in their ceremonies in order to show themselves as a democratic movement in exile."

● German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution,  
available at <http://irandibban.com/en/ViewPoint-Germany%20and%20MKO/12159>



## Camp Ashraf and the Geneva Conventions

The House of Commons Library provides information and research services for Members of Parliament and their staff in support of their parliamentary duties. In a report on March 2009, Arabella Thorp wrote about the former military headquarters of MKO in Iraq, Camp Ashraf, and whether the Geneva Conventions apply to the MKO members.

### What is Camp Ashraf?

Ashraf is a settlement in Iraq's Diyala province, near the border with Iran, which houses the headquarters of the People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI), also known as Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MEK) or Mujahideen-e-Khalq Organisation (MKO). The PMOI is the main body in the coalition of Iranian opposition groups known as the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), and is regarded as a terrorist organisation by a number of states but has now been removed from the UK and EU lists of terrorist organisations. It relocated its headquarters to Iraq in 1986 during the Iran-Iraq war with the support of Saddam Hussein, though the PMOI has denied that it sided militarily with the Iraqi regime. Following the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, the PMOI surrendered to US forces and 3,800 PMOI members were disarmed and cantoned in Camp Ashraf under US protection. Some 370 have since been voluntarily repatriated to Iran, and in 2004 when Ashraf's residents were declared to be civilians rather than military personnel some restrictions and controls were removed. The Iraqi government has stated its intention to close the camp and expel all PMOI personnel from Iraqi territory.

### Who is responsible for the inhabitants of Ashraf?

The main responsibility to protect civilians lies with the states that have effective control over them. From 2003 until 31 December 2008 US forces protected Camp Ashraf. Then on 1 January 2009, control passed to the Iraqi Government, under the new US-Iraq Status of Forces Agreement. Both the US and Iraqi governments have given assurances that, within the framework of Iraqi national legislation, Ashraf residents will be treated in accordance with international humanitarian law and with the principle of non-refoulement in particular. The UK considers the issue primarily a US rather than a UK responsibility.



## What are the main concerns?

Living conditions at Ashraf are not generally a cause for concern, although an explosion damaged Ashraf's water-supply station in February 2008. Iraq has reportedly given Ashraf's inhabitants two options: return to Iran or find a third country for exile. Iraqi officials have however stated that PMOI members would not be forcibly repatriated to Iran and have called upon the international community to offer asylum to Ashraf's occupants.

People who claim to have left Camp Ashraf voluntarily have reported 'brain-washing', forced indoctrination and rough treatment by the PMOI of those who wanted to leave the camp.

## Do the Geneva Conventions apply?

In July 2004, the PMOI forces in Ashraf were declared by the US to be 'protected persons' under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 (rather than military personnel under the Third Geneva Convention), because they had not been belligerents during the Iraq War. The Fourth Geneva Convention protects civilians who, as the result of an international armed conflict or of occupation, find themselves in the hands of a country of which they are not nationals. It states that in no circumstances shall a protected person be transferred to a country where he or she may have reason to fear persecution for his or her political opinions or religious beliefs. In the case of occupied territory, the Convention continues to apply for a year after the general close of military operations, and partially thereafter if the occupying power continues to exercise the functions of government. The occupation of Iraq formally ended on 30 June 2004.

## What other international law is relevant?

Under the international law principle of non-refoulement, no-one should be deported, expelled or repatriated if there is a real risk that they may be subjected to any kind of ill-treatment, or that they may face persecution on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. The US has ratified international conventions embodying this principle (the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1984 UN Convention Against Torture), but Iraq has not. However, non-refoulement is widely recognised as a principle of customary international law that binds all states.

● House of Commons Library, "In brief: Camp Ashraf and the Geneva Conventions," March 20, 2009; available at [www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05022.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05022.pdf)



## MKO Remains a Source of Concern

What follows is the Response of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to the Third Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee Session 2003-2004 Iran

The Government welcomes this timely Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee. The UK's relations with Iran affect vital UK interests in fields as diverse as proliferation, terrorism, human rights, illegal migration, and the trade in illegal narcotics. We endorse the Report's main conclusions and recommendations, and set out our response below.

8. We recommend that in its response to this Report the Government tell us what is the current extent of support for the terrorist organisation MEK in third countries, and what it is doing to minimise that support. (Paragraph 40)

We believe that support for the Mojahedin-e Khalq (MeK) in all countries is very low. Popular support for the MeK both in Iran and overseas is far lower than the organisation's own publicity would indicate. This is hardly surprising. The MeK has acknowledged its responsibility for terrorist acts against civilian and military targets in Iran and other countries. From the mid-1980s until last year, the MeK received extensive support from Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The MeK remains a source of concern. The MeK has been proscribed by successive Home Secretaries under the Terrorism Act 2000. UK policy is that there should be no contact between Ministers or officials and members of the MeK or the National Council of the Resistance of Iran (NCRI), a group with which the MeK is closely associated. The MeK is regarded as a terrorist organisation by the EU, and the US designated it a Foreign Terrorist Organisation in 1997. Despite occasional claims by Iran to the contrary, we believe the US takes this designation seriously. Following the conflict in Iraq, the US military detained around 3,800 people at Camp Ashraf, the main MeK base 100km from Baghdad, greatly reducing the MeK's ability to carry out terrorist attacks. The US is currently screening and interviewing detainees, and will take decisions about their future once that process of screening is complete. The US has also taken steps to close the offices in the US of the NCRI.

● UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, "Third Report of Session 2003-04, Response of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs," May 2004; available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmffaff/80/80.pdf>



## French Police Raided MKO HQ, Detained 159 MKO Members



The French police raided MKO headquarters on June 17, 2003, apprehending a number of MKO members and the group's ringleader, Maryam Rajavi. What follows is the report of Elaine Ganley's Associated Press of the raids.

"Masked and heavily armed police raided the compound of an Iranian opposition group Tuesday, detaining activists on suspicion of plotting terrorist attacks in France and building a support base for operations abroad.

The dramatic raids came a month after U.S. forces disarmed the military wing of the group, the Mujahadeen Khalq, in Iraq. The organization, which the United States and European Union classify as a terrorist group, seeks to topple Iran's clerical regime.

French authorities detained 159 people in the raids on the compound north of Paris and 12 other sites outside the city. The authorities seized \$1.3 million in U.S. currency, mostly 100-dollar bills, along with computers and satellite telecommunications equipment.

"This is about fighting against eventual acts of terrorism perpetrated on French territory," Justice Minister Dominique Perben said on France-Info radio.

The raid occurred amid street protests by pro-democracy demonstrators in Iran and as Europeans urge the Islamic regime to open its nuclear sites to international inspections. Tehran had complained that Western nations were allowing the Mujahadeen to operate freely while, at the same time, accusing Iran of links to Middle East terrorist organizations.

It was unclear if the raids, which France said were planned a month ago, were connected to the unrest in Iran.



The raids drew protests from sympathizers, including one who set himself on fire outside the French Embassy in London. In Hamburg, Germany, police detained 50 demonstrators after some entered Iran's Consulate, kicking over furniture.

The Iranian government, which calls the Mujahedeen Khalq a terrorist organization, praised the raids. "We expected French authorities ... to take actions against them," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told the government news agency IRNA.

The French government said the raids were aimed at stopping the group from expanding operations in its territory.

The group "recently wanted to make France its support base, notably after the intervention in Iraq," Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy told lawmakers, referring to the disarming of the organization's military wing, the National Liberation Army of Iran, in May. "We cannot accept that."

At dawn Tuesday, more than 1,300 police kicked their way into the walled compound in Auvers-Sur-Oise, north of Paris that has served as the group's headquarters.

Among those arrested was a top figure in the group, Maryam Rajavi, the wife of Iraq-based Mujahedeen leader Massoud Rajavi, as well as Rajavi's brother, Saleh.

The raids were carried out on orders of French anti-terrorism Judge Jean-Louis Bruguiere for "criminal association aimed at preparing terrorism acts and for financing a terrorist enterprise," the Interior Ministry said.

French officials opened an investigation into the group's suspected terrorist links in 2001.

The Paris prosecutors office only last week added "financing a terrorist enterprise" to the dossier, according to judicial officials.

The group denounced the raids as illegal."



## Swiss Federal Office for Migration Rejects MKO Members



Referring to the Iraqi Government's plan to expel MKO from Iraq before December 31, 2011, the German-language newspaper in Switzerland 20 Minutes wrote, "Despite US pressures, the Swiss Federal Office for Migration (FOM) rejected the resettlement of 11 members of the MKO organization."

"These individuals pose a great threat to our national security," Federal Office for Migration in Switzerland explained that why they did not accept MKO members, IRNA quoted the newspaper as reporting.

"According to experts, members of this organization are really acting like groups of mafia, and they have committed numerous terrorist attacks in the past," the newspaper added.

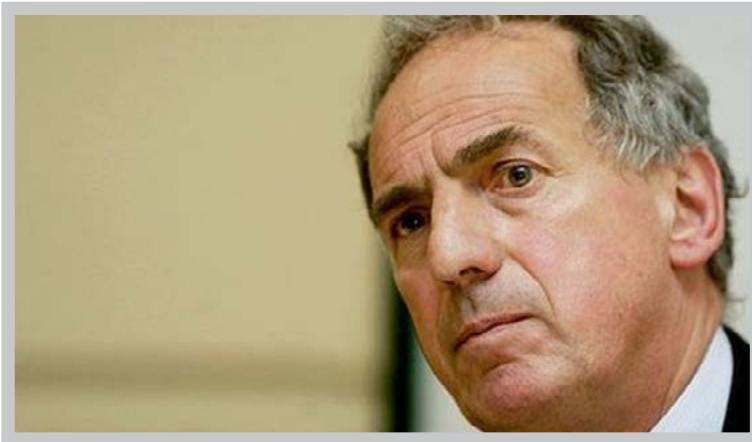
Secretary-General of Swiss relief organizations also considered MKO as an aggressive and violent organization.

Asked whether members of the MKO use Switzerland as a base for terrorism, the Swiss Middle East analyst Erich Gysling said, "yes, and the Swiss Federal Government is considering all these threats."

● 20 Minuten, "Kommunistische Iran-Kämpfer aufnehmen", December 18, 2011, available at <http://www.20min.ch/panorama/news/story/Kommunistische-Iran-Kaempfer-aufnehmen-18299910>



## Memories of MKO Attacks Still Vivid in Iranians Minds



**F**urther letter to the Chairman of the Committee from Dr Kim Howells MP, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

At the end of the session you asked about the Mojahedin e Khalq (MeK, also known as the PMOI or MKO) As the judgment in the appeal to the Proscribed Organisations

Appeal Commission (POAC) was due to be handed down later that week, you requested that I send a response to your question in writing once the judgment is in the public domain. I am now writing to answer your initial question and set out a little on the implications of the judgment.

You mentioned that the MeK was discussed during many of your meetings in Iran, and asked why the issue is of such significance. During the 1980s and 1990s the MeK carried out a range of serious violent attacks on the Iranian authorities, in Iran and elsewhere. In 1992, the MeK carried out attacks on Iranian embassies in thirteen countries, and between 1998 and 2001 the MeK carried out a number of attacks in Iran which resulted in civilian as well as military casualties. Memories of these at-



tacks, and of the MeK's support for Iraq during the long and bitter Iran/Iraq war, are still vivid in Iranian minds.

As you know, the then Home Secretary proscribed the organisation in 2001. Supporters of the MeK have opposed the organisation's proscription and have regularly called for it to be deproscribed. As part of this process, last year a group of MPs and Peers took a case on behalf of the MeK to the Proscribed Organisations Appeals Commission. The POAC judgment, made public on 30 November, allowed the appeal and instructed the Home Secretary to lay an order before Parliament removing the MeK from the list of proscribed organisations.

As Tony McNulty has made clear, we are disappointed at the judgment. We believe that our approach to the MeK, which took a cautious view of the request for deproscription, was correct. We note that the judgment agreed that it was a reasonable decision to proscribe the MeK in 2001, and concluded that many of the MeK's public statements contain "spin" which justified a cautious approach to the material. POAC also concluded that there was no evidence for the allegation put forward by the appellants that there had been a deal with Iran to proscribe the MeK, or for the "exceptionally serious" allegation that the US and UK had agreed to bomb the MeK in Iraq in 2003. We welcome these findings.

The Home Secretary intends to seek permission to appeal. While the appeal process is ongoing no action will be taken to remove the MeK from the list of proscribed organisations (in accordance with the terms of the Terrorism Act 2000).

● British Parliamentary Publications, "Further letter to the Chairman of the Committee from Dr Kim Howells MP," December 13, 2007; available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmfaaff/142/7112814.htm>



## MKO's Objections to No Exit Report Unwarranted

### **S**TATEMENT ON RESPONSES TO HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH REPORT ON ABUSES BY THE MOJAHEDIN-E KHALQ ORGANIZATION (MKO)

In May 2005, Human Rights Watch issued a report on alleged human rights abuses committed by an Iranian opposition group, the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO/MEK), inside its military camps in Iraq from 1991 to February 2003, prior to the fall of Saddam Hussein's government. The report, *No Exit: Human Rights Abuses Inside the MKO Camps*, detailed allegations by 12 former members of the MKO who told Human Rights Watch of a range of physical and psychological abuses they had suffered and witnessed. In addition, the report made use of the published memoir of the MKO's former chief diplomatic representative in Europe and North America, Masoud Banisadr.

Following publication of this Human Rights Watch report, individuals associated with the MKO and others, in communications to Human Rights Watch as well as publicly on Web sites connected with the MKO, raised objections to the findings of the report. We have investigated with care the criticisms we received concerning the substance and methodology of the report, and find those criticisms to be unwarranted.

A number of critics of the report claimed that Human Rights Watch was calling on the United States, Canada, and the European Union not to remove the MKO from their respective lists of groups identified as perpetrating or advocating acts of terrorism, in the face of a campaign by the MKO to have itself removed from such lists. Human Rights Watch in fact at no point, either in the report or in responses to media and other queries, took any position whatsoever on whether the MKO should be on such lists or removed from them. Rather, we did no more than report what we believed to be credible testimonies alleging serious abuses perpetrated by MKO



officials against dissident members of the group, including prolonged deprivation of liberty and torture.

A group known as Friends of a Free Iran (FOFI), comprising four Members of the European Parliament—Alejo Vidal Quadras, Paulo Casaca, Andre Brie, and Struan Stevenson—presented the most extensive of the critiques of the No Exit report on September 21, 2005. The FOFI document disputed the testimonies and challenged the credibility of the witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch, saying, among other things, that their allegations were “widely believed to be orchestrated by Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence.” The MKO has similarly alleged that Human Rights Watch’s witnesses, and dissident former members generally, are in fact agents of Iranian intelligence. Neither FOFI nor any of the other critics of the Human Rights Watch report have provided any credible evidence to support this charge.

The FOFI document followed a five-day visit by a delegation of FOFI members to the MKO’s main base in Iraq, Camp Ashraf, in July 2005. The FOFI delegation reportedly interviewed 19 MKO members inside Camp Ashraf. According to the FOFI document, these present MKO members disputed testimonies given by the former MKO members to Human Rights Watch. The FOFI delegation did not interview any of the individuals who gave testimonies to Human Rights Watch.

Because Human Rights Watch places a high premium on the accuracy of our reporting and public statements, the organization took these allegations seriously. We went back to our sources to review and reevaluate the credibility of their allegations. In October 2005 Human Rights Watch researchers met in person with all 12 witnesses quoted in the No Exit report. The researchers conducted interviews lasting several hours with each witness, individually and privately. All interviews were conducted in Germany and the Netherlands, where the witnesses now live.

All of the witnesses recounted in extensive detail their experiences inside the MKO camps from the 1991-2003 period, and how MKO officials subjected them to various forms of physical and psychological abuses once they made known their wishes to leave the organization. Human Rights Watch researchers questioned the witnesses at great length about the circumstances under which these abuses allegedly took place. The researchers also asked the witnesses to respond to the specific issues raised in the FOFI document with regard to their testimonies. The witnesses



provided detailed and credible responses to these challenges that were consistent with their earlier testimony as recounted in No Exit and are detailed in the appendix to this statement.

The only piece of information that emerged during these detailed face-to-face interviews that differed from the account in No Exit concerned the period of Mohammad Hussein Sobhani's detention by the MKO. In No Exit, Human Rights Watch reported that MKO officials had held Sobhani in solitary confinement for eight-and-a-half years, from September 1992 to January 2001. The FOI document stated that "upon his own request, he [Sobhani] lived in an apartment furnished with all living commodities of a comfortable life. Despite PMOI's insistence that he must leave the organization, he was not willing to do so . . ."

In his testimony in October 2005, Sobhani told Human Rights Watch that MKO officials held him continuously in solitary confinement from September 1992 until February 1998 inside Camp Ashraf, a period of five-and-a-half years. He said that in February 1998 the MKO leadership offered to transfer him to a better location and then to facilitate his transfer to Europe, where his daughter was living. Subsequently, the MKO moved Sobhani to another MKO camp near Baghdad, called Camp Parsian. He said he stayed there until June 1999, under circumstances that he described as "house arrest." He said he was free to leave his apartment in Camp Parsian but could not leave the camp unless accompanied by MKO guards, and could not leave for Europe. In June 1999, during a visit to Baghdad, he escaped and attempted to reach the United Nations office there. He was captured by the Iraqi police and turned over to MKO officials. From June 1999 until January 2001, Sobhani said, the MKO again held him in a prison inside Camp Ashraf, once again in solitary confinement. In January 2001, the MKO transferred Sobhani to Iraqi custody. The Iraqi authorities imprisoned him in Abu Ghraib until January 21, 2002.

As reported by the witnesses interviewed for No Exit, the MKO transferred scores of dissident members from MKO detention into Iraqi custody. Iraqi authorities then incarcerated the men in Abu Ghraib prison. Five of the twelve individuals interviewed by Human Rights Watch for No Exit said they ended up in Abu Ghraib as a result of such transfers, and they told Human Rights Watch that former MKO members were being held there when they arrived. The FOI document fails to address the MKO's



transfer of the dissidents to Iraqi custody or their subsequent detention in Abu Ghraib.

The FOI document also raised two other objections to the Human Rights Watch report. Firstly, the FOI document questioned Human Rights Watch's methodology of conducting interviews with witnesses by phone. Human Rights Watch, like other organizations that conduct research and report on current affairs, sometimes relies on telephone interviews to gather information. Telephone interviews are a recognized and appropriate method of information gathering. Human Rights Watch has no reason to believe that any of the witnesses misidentified or (misrepresented) themselves in any way whatsoever. They reaffirmed their credibility in face to face interviews in October 2005.

Secondly, the FOI document challenged Human Rights Watch's report by stating that, during their visit to Camp Ashraf, the FOI delegation did not find any indications of abuse or ill-treatment of MKO members. The Human Rights Watch report, as was made clear in that text, covered allegations of abuse inside the MKO camps prior to the overthrow of the government of Saddam Hussein in April 2003. The testimonies by witnesses who recounted allegations of detention and physical abuse cover the period from 1991 to February 2003. After the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003, US forces interviewed MKO members inside the MKO camps. The US military set up a separate camp for those members who indicated that they wished to leave the organization. At least 300 members (out of a total of nearly 4,000) chose to leave the organization. The Human Rights Watch report did not include any testimonies or allegations of witnesses as to whether there were ongoing abuses inside Camp Ashraf after the invasion of Iraq. Thus, the findings of FOI with respect to current conditions in the MKO camp have no relevance to the Human Rights Watch report of testimonies about conditions in the camp from 1991 to February 2003.

● British Parliamentary Publications, "Further written evidence submitted by Human Rights Watch" February 23, 2006; available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmfaff/574/5111609.htm>



## MKO Fully Integrated into Saddam's Security Apparatus

**L**etter from the Parliamentary Relations and Devolution Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the Chairman of the Committee, 1 July 2003

In the Chairman's letter of 1 May to Mike O'Brien about the Chairman's meeting with Ambassador Sarmadi on 30 April, he specifically asked about coalition policy towards the Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organisation (MKO). It is just not true for the Ambassador to claim that the MKO are a tool of the coalition. As you will know, both we and the US regard the MKO as a terrorist organisation; it is on the list of groups proscribed by the Home Secretary under the Terrorism Act 2000. Furthermore, we firmly believe that the MKO had been fully integrated into Saddam Hussein's security apparatus. As such, during the conflict hostile MKO operatives were targeted like other Iraqi forces. After the cessation of hostilities US forces were not able to take on such a complex organisation immediately. But I can confirm that on 8 May US forces surrounded the main body of MKO forces and gave them an ultimatum. They are now systematically detaining and disarming them. We appreciated Iran's restraint in not intervening during the conflict.



Following is a compilation of UK politicians and parliamentarians' comments and concerns about MKO during the 2000s retrieved from the British parliamentary debates.







## Saddam has been Training MKO Terrorists

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: ... In May this year, the European Parliament passed a profoundly serious resolution. I was the drafter of the resolution. It was strengthened by the Foreign Affairs Committee.

In the end we passed it with an 85 per cent majority. It was a double-sized report because of the importance of what we felt we had to say. It was accepted by the European Commission. We are now awaiting such implementation of our final resolution as the Commission can achieve. We are concerned that the Council of Ministers does not seem to have taken the report fully into account.

We made a number of serious proposals. Our view at the time—and it continues to be our view—was that Iraq certainly posed a threat to regional stability and world security. I remind the House that under UN resolutions from the beginning of the last decade Saddam Hussein has been forbidden to set up training camps for terrorists. Yet we know that he has been training the MKO terrorists. We have all the evidence that we require that he has not stopped this particular action. I would guess that he has been training other terrorists too. But we have the knowledge that he has not stopped.



## Saddam Worked Collaboratively with MKO

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: ... In his report, the noble and learned Lord, Lord Hutton, referred to the continued controversy and debate surrounding the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. But I think that there can be no serious doubt that Saddam Hussein possessed and sought to develop weapons of mass destruction throughout the whole of the 1990s and the early years of the 21st century. Indeed, there is evidence that he was doing so in collaboration with foreign terrorist organisations.

Newly unearthed extensive video evidence that I have received on my latest visit to the region shows collaboration between Saddam Hussein (on video) and a leader of an international terrorist organisation. Masoud Rajavi, leader of the MKO, is shown with Saddam Hussein discussing various actions locally, domestically and internationally. They are shown plotting and money being given in payment for services rendered and in payment for services to be rendered, which are discussed very explicitly. The evidence clearly shows international terrorist organisational work between Saddam Hussein and outside organisations. Another set of videos shows collaboration between international terrorist organisations and the head of the Iraq secret police.

Witness reports from non-Iraqis show descriptions of the transport and concealment of what clearly were non-conventional weapons, the involvement of non-Iraqi Arabs, and, I believe, the involvement of the Taliban as well. I personally have received witness reports that describe the construction, by non-Iraqi Arabs, of secret military facilities, and the burial of what appear to be weapons of mass destruction. I have witness reports confirming republican guard training of non-Iraqi Arabs. There is also evidence of foreign collaboration in the suppression of ethnic minorities—both Kurd and Shi'a. That evidence is clear throughout the 1990s and into the early 21st century.

● House of Lords Debates, February 4, 2004;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200304/ldhansrd/vo040204/text/40204-08.htm>



## MKO a Threat to World Security

### Situation in Iraq

...

Nicholson of Winterbourne (ELDR). – Mr President, the risk of terrorism is omnipresent now. The dull and brooding presence of sudden, unanticipated and violent death hangs over military and civilians alike in all our nations. Links have been found recently between the Al Qaeda network and pro-Saddam forces fighting the free Kurdish people in northern Iraq. However, a much better established and older terrorist organisation has been working inside Iraq since 1986: the MKO, or MEK as they are known inside the USA. The MKO have thousands of members inside Iraq and thousands outside, financed, equipped, armed and trained by the Iraqi army and fully engaged, militarily at least, since 1986 in all of Saddam's many wars.

The USA froze MEK assets in 1994, declaring the group under its many aliases to be an international terrorist organisation. The EU followed the US example as late as 2001, yet last week the New York Times published a full-page advertisement for the MEK, using the names and photographs of members of the US Congress and claiming their support. Our recent debates on Iraq have been attended by known members of MKO. These people are a threat to world security. Their organisation strikes silently but with lethal impact. This is Saddam's private international terrorist army, working against us all. Whatever our differences on the future treatment of Iraq, for the sake of our citizens and global safety, I urge that far greater security attention be paid to the MKO. For war or no war, with or without a war, the criminals who make up the MKO continually kill and destroy the innocent among us.



## MKO Rules by Brainwashing, Force and Weapons

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: My Lords, Resolution 1441 is unequivocal. All United Nations Security Council members forged a common position based on the view that Iraq today poses a major threat inside and outside its borders, a threat sufficiently serious to trigger the gravest consequences of all—military action—to force her to comply with all resolutions passed by the United Nations since 1991. Resolution 1441 goes right back to Resolution 687. One of the prohibitions placed on Iraq then was terrorism. Resolution 687, in paragraph 32, required Iraq,

“to inform the Security Council that it will not commit or support any act of international terrorism or allow any organisation directed towards commission of such acts to operate within its territory and to condemn unequivocally and renounce all acts, methods and practices of terrorism”.

Three weeks ago, I questioned the Iraqi ambassador to the United Nations, Ambassador Al Douri, on terrorism. He told me:

“Iraq has no links with international terrorist organisations”.

Others have questioned Saddam Hussein, who declared in his interview last night with Dan Rather, of the US television channel, that Iraq has no links with the Al’Qaeda network. I do not think that we need to look that far to see that Iraq is in grave breach of paragraph 32 of Resolution 687.

I call noble Lords’ attention to the MKO, an organisation proscribed by the United Kingdom, the USA and the European Union. What is it? How does it work? The MKO has a clear history. The organisation was set up in 1960 to operate against the Shah—who was himself an impostor as his grandfather took the throne from the hereditary Shah in 1924. The MKO was a part of the Iranian revolution in 1979. However, it had a disagreement with the new government, in 1981, and moved to Iraq, where it has based itself since 1986. The MKO claims to be a modern human rights movement, the true opposition to the current government in Iran, and that it



fights only the Iranian military. It says that it never attacks civilians or nationalities other than Iranians.

In fact, the MKO's guiding rules are not based on human rights at all. It is deeply unpopular in Iran, inter alia because of its involvement in the Iran-Iraq war, when it fought against Iran. One of its great claims is that it promotes women's rights and that it opposes the wearing of the Hijab. However, every one of the women who is a member of the MKO or serves in its forces wears the Hijab. The MKO has separate training camps for women. It rules by brainwashing, force and weapons. It is a personality cult of Mr Rajavi, its head.

Let us look at the claim that the MKO fights only against Iranian military forces and never assaults civilians. The actuality is that the MKO participated actively, in August 1998, in the chemical weapons assault on the northern Kurdish Iraqis at Halabja. What did its forces do? Evidence given to me by those involved declares that the MKO troops guarded the Iraqi border so that the unfortunate Kurds could not escape. The MKO was involved, according to evidence given to me, in the 1990 invasion of Kuwait. It supplied the Iraqi army with weapons and tanks. There is also Kuwaiti evidence of its involvement.

In 1991, MKO forces brutally crushed the subsequent uprising of the Kurds. They said:

"We killed thousands of them".

MKO forces were active in support of the Iraqi army's brutal oppression of the southern Shias, where thousands more were killed. I have evidence, too, that they were involved in the draining of the Iraqi marshlands—a subject to which I shall return on the genocide against the Iraqi Marsh people, against whom draining of the marshland has been the final weapon. MKO forces have been involved in attacking the Marsh Arabs from 1992 onwards. The MKO is a mercenary force, armed, trained, mobilised and deployed by the Iraqi military. Indeed, its leader, Mr Rajavi, constantly claims that he walks,

"hand in hand with Saddam".

What is the MKO's international links? Those, too, can be proven by the people trained in the MKO's own military camps in Iraq. They are European—French, Italian, British. They are Arab, from other Arab nations. They are from South America. If one wants to trace the elusive link with the Al'Qaeda network and Saddam Hussein, one



should note that the MKO was active in the Taliban. The Taliban, of course, provided the nursery for Al'Qaeda's network. On Iraq's links with international terrorism, I urge noble Lords to look no further than the MKO.

In the global post-9/11 fight against terrorism, Iraq is in the dock, in clear breach of 687 and therefore of 1441. Iraq's MKO ownership and direction makes the Iraqi denial of links with any international terrorist organisation frankly untrue. This organisation, owned by Iraq, is a threat outside Iraq. Inside Iraq, I have evidence from others that the MKO has actively hidden weapons of mass destruction from the earlier inspectors.

Let us examine the case for weapons of mass destruction and Iraq. Once more, I refer to Resolution 687 of 1991, which declares that the United Nations Security Council was:

"Conscious also of the statements by Iraq threatening to use weapons in violation of its obligations under the Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925, and of its prior use of chemical weapons and affirming that grave consequences would follow any further use by Iraq of such weapons".

The resolution, in paragraph 8:

"Decides that Iraq shall unconditionally accept the destruction, removal, or rendering harmless, under international supervision, of: ... All chemical and biological weapons and all stocks of agents and all related subsystems and components and all research, development, support and manufacturing facilities . . . All ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometres".

Indeed, it states that Iraq shall unconditionally undertake not to use, develop, construct or acquire any of the items specified.

I asked Ambassador Al Douri about Iraq's retention of weapons of mass destruction. He told me clearly in front of witnesses that Iraq had disarmed from all weapons of mass destruction two to three years ago. He added spontaneously that nor did Iraq poison her own citizens. As a mouthpiece of his master, Saddam Hussein, Mr Al Douri says only what he is authorised to say. Saddam Hussein's television interview last night reiterates those views.

Is Iraq in breach of Resolution 687? What is the evidence? I have first-hand



evidence over the years when I paid many visits to the Iraq and Iranian borders, the Iraqi marshlands and the Iraqi refugees. From 1992 I have clear evidence from an eye-witness of three parcels being dropped from a helicopter which burst on landing. Seven people died within three hours. There were no external wounds at all, but bleeding from apertures in their face. Their skin turned blue. Others were made very ill.

In 1996 I reported to Geneva to those charged with monitoring the chemical weapons convention, to which I have just referred, that there was a yellow explosion from an aeroplane over the marshlands. I interviewed some of the victims. They said that it was a great, yellow cloud that spread across their land. Hundreds of people died and many were very ill. I interviewed a handful of the survivors shortly afterwards.

In 1998 I had clear evidence of the defeat of the weapons inspectors' only visit to an MKO camp. That was the only visit that they were allowed because Saddam Hussein declared to the weapons inspectors that the MKO camps and sites were diplomatically protected; that they were inside Iraq, but they had to be treated as though they were foreign embassies. That meant that the inspectors went in only once. I have clear evidence of the ways in which the MKO shifted around weapons of mass destruction. Their commanders pushed them away, hid them, and boasted afterwards of having been successful in fooling the inspectors.





## UK Condemned MKO's Assassination of Assadollah Lajevardi

Iran: Mujaheddin Actions

Lord Alton of Liverpool asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they are aware of any instances documented by sources independent of the Iranian Government where civilians have been maimed or killed during military operations carried out against the Iranian regime by the Mujaheddin over recent years; what account they have taken of the statement issued by the majority of members of the United States House of Representatives on 16 September that the Mujaheddin is "legitimate opposition to the Iranian regime"; and whether they recognise the right of Iranian people to resist a dictatorship.

Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean: Her Majesty's Government do not recognise the National Council for Resistance of Iran (NCRI), of which the Mujaheddin-e-Khalq Organisation (MKO), otherwise known as the People's Mujaheddin of Iran (PMOI), is the dominant party. Her Majesty's Government remains firmly opposed to the violence practiced by the MKO and to terrorism from any quarter. The MKO has claimed responsibility for the bomb explosion at the Iranian Revolutionary Court in Tehran in June, which killed at least two people. They have also claimed responsibility for the recent shooting of Mr. Lajevardi, the former head of the prison service, in his shop in the bazaar in Tehran, in which it appears that a passer-by and a friend of Mr. Lajevardi were also killed. Such attacks on unarmed individuals in public places, with the resultant deaths of passers-by, can hardly be considered as "military" actions. Her Majesty's Government condemned both attacks unreservedly.

The MKO remains on the US State Department list of terrorist organisations despite the recent statement by the House of Representatives.

● House of Lords Debates, October 20, 1998;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199798/ldhansrd/vo981020/text/81020w02.htm>



## NCRI is Dominated by a Terrorist Organisation

Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean: My Lords, I am aware of the statement. The noble Viscount will not be surprised to know that Her Majesty's Government do not agree with the statement that the regime in Iran is incapable of change. Both the November UN resolution on human rights in Iran, and the most recent report by the United Nations special representative, Maurice Copithorne, noted important improvements brought about by the present Government there. We prefer our analysis to be based on these internationally respected sources rather than on the propaganda of the National Council for the Resistance of Iran, which is mentioned in the statement and which appears largely to have inspired it. The NCRI is dominated by a terrorist organisation, the Mujahedin-e-Khalq, and the MKO is still on the US State Department proscribed list of terrorist organisations.

● House of Lords Debates, April 21, 1999;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199899/ldhansrd/vo990421/text/90421-01.htm>





## MKO Members do not Qualify as Refugees

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Malloch-Brown): Responsibility for the security and administration of Camp Ashraf was transferred on 1 January 2009 from the US to the Iraqi authorities. Prior to this handover the US received assurances from the Iraqi authorities towards their clear commitment to the humane treatment and continued well-being of the camp residents. The US retains a presence at the camp in an advisory/monitoring capacity.

The Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights visits the camp and has delivered assurances to a representative body of the residents. The International Committee of the Red Cross follows developments at the camp closely and continues to visit. It also discusses on a confidential basis all of the issues surrounding the camp with the People's Mujahedin of Iran (MEK) and the Iraqi and US authorities.

The UN High Commission for Refugees has previously determined that Camp Ashraf residents do not qualify as refugees. While there is no evidence to suggest that the Government of Iraq intend forcibly to relocate the residents, our embassy in Baghdad has requested a call on the Ministry of Human Rights to make known the level of interest in this issue in the UK and to remind the Iraqi Government of their earlier assurances. Our embassy in Baghdad is also pursuing the possibility of a visit to the camp by a consular official.

● House of Lords Debates, April 20, 2009;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200809/ldhansrd/text/90420w0009.htm>



## MKO Assimilated into the Security Apparatus of Saddam

Baroness Turner of Camden: My Lords, is my noble friend aware that the PMOI, which is led by a woman, Madam Rajavi, has an agenda for peaceful change via a political process, believes in a human rights agenda, including women's rights, and its policies are the sort that we should support?

Lord Malloch-Brown: My Lords, I certainly concede the point that the organisation is led by a woman, but I will risk the wrath of a portion of this House when I say that despite that, and despite what it says about the rights of women, the PMOI was involved in numerous terrorist attacks for a very extended period.

At the time of the second Gulf War, it was considered by coalition forces to be completely assimilated into the security apparatus of the Saddam Hussein regime. Indeed, we had to disarm the organisation to the extent of 2,100 tanks, vehicles and artillery pieces. Since then it has made no renunciation of terrorism and disarmed only in the face of pressure from coalition forces; so, despite what it has to say on women's rights, we are not convinced that in other regards this organisation has permanently renounced terrorism.

● House of Lords Debates, February 5, 2008;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldhansrd/text/80205-0002.htm>





## MKO's Assertions are not Credible

Lord Phillips of Sudbury: ... Those noble Lords who are unaware of the background of the Mujaheddin e Khalk (MeK)--or as it is sometimes called, the MKO--and the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), which supports the MeK, should understand that the organisations have a Marxist-Leninist Islamic root. Although they took part in the revolution which overthrew the Shah and were indeed one of the most extreme organisations in that bloody revolution, they and their leader, Massoud Rajavi, lost out in the post-revolution struggle between the different groups concerned, despite being hard-line anti-American. They were expelled from France in 1986 and then de-camped to Iraq where they have remained ever since. Their finances and their arms come from Saddam Hussein. They supported Saddam Hussein during his grab for Iranian territory in the early 1980s which was only successfully resisted by Iran after an appalling war in which the Iranians lost over 1 million people. It is not to our credit, or that of America, that we supplied Saddam with his arms on that occasion. The MKO is still based in Iraq. Against that background, the assertion regularly made by the MeK and its supporters--that they have widespread popular support in Iran--is not credible. The MeK and related organisations have been formally designated as foreign terrorist organisations by the United States for many years, and were redesignated as such in October 1999.

On 24th March last year, when answering press questions, Secretary of State James Rubin made clear that the Americans viewed the NCRI, "as an alias for the MeK".

He made clear that the Americans viewed the MeK as an organisation through which Saddam Hussein sponsors terrorism. He also said that, "this is a satellite photograph of a new headquarters complex that Saddam Hussein has built for the MeK"--that is, a complex situated at Falluja, which is about 40 kilometres from Baghdad--"when it becomes operational, in our judgment, it will be used to co-ordinate MeK terrorist activities and to plan attacks against targets in Iran and elsewhere".

● House of Lords Debates, March 27, 2001;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200001/ldhansrd/vo010327/text/10327-14.htm>



## ■ Saddam Ruthlessly Used MKO

Lord Phillips of Sudbury: ... The MKO/MeK/NCRI, which provides much of the information--although much of it is not true information--to Members of this and other Houses, is a Marxist/Leninist organisation paid for by Saddam Hussein, quartered outside Baghdad and used ruthlessly by him as an instrument of general nuisance making, particularly in the light of his grappling with Iran in that atrocious eight-year war which ended only the year before he occupied Kuwait. The difference was that whereas we got on a mighty high horse over Kuwait, when he attacked Iran we did nothing except supply him with his arms, including chemical weapons.

● House of Lords Debates, April 25, 2001;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200001/ldhansrd/vo010425/text/10425-10.htm>





## UK Firmly Opposed to the Violence Practiced by MKO

Lord Bassam of Brighton: ... During the debate this afternoon your Lordships' House has been regaled with pleas for several organisations to be removed from the list or reconsidered. At all times we are in a position to do that, but we have come to a fixed view. I turn first to the Mujaheddin e Khalq which has excited most interest and a very passionate debate, perhaps best exemplified, on the one hand, by the noble Lord, Lord Phillips, and, on the other, by the contributions of the noble Lord, Lord Alton, and my noble friend, Lord Clarke of Hampstead. I have no doubt that the views expressed were based on those particular noble Lords' understanding of that organisation.

In the end, I must agree with most of the analysis of the Mujaheddin e Khalq offered to your Lordships' House by the noble Lord, Lord Phillips. From all that we know of it, it is a terrorist organisation. The MeK claims to be a democratic party which fights for a different and better Iran, but its terrorist actions are not consistent with that claim. I do not believe that we can see it as a democratic freedom movement. As the noble Lord, Lord Phillips, argued, the MeK has no popular base in Iran because of its support for Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war. The MeK headquarters are based in Baghdad. My understanding is that the organisation is still one of Saddam's most trusted supporters. As to that, I can confirm what the noble Lord, Lord Phillips, said.

The MeK was also responsible for the assassination in August 1998 of Asadollah Lajevardi, a former Minister of Prisons. In April 1999 the Iranian Deputy Joint Chief of Staff of Iran's armed forces was killed in Tehran by MeK operatives. The MeK also claimed responsibility for a series of mortar bomb attacks during January and February 2000 against the south-western town of Ilam and in early 2001 against Karaj and Ilam. The British Government remain firmly opposed to the violence practised by the MeK. Her Majesty's Government have condemned acts of terrorism by that organisation, just as they condemn all acts of terrorism wherever and whenever they take place, whatever their motivation.

● House of Lords Debates; March 27, 2001;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200001/ldhansrd/vo010327/text/10327-18.htm>





## MKO's Claims are not Credible

Mr. Temple-Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received concerning the claims by the Iranian exile group, the National Council of Resistance, about the turnout for the recent Iranian Majles elections and falsification of results. [113069]c Mr. Hain: I was aware of this attempt by the National Council for the Resistance of Iran (NCRI) to dismiss as a fraud the conduct and outcome of the recent Iranian elections. Their claims are not credible. The political choice made in the elections by the Iranian people is a matter for them, but our view, and that of all impartial observers, is that the election result in Iran has been a substantial vote of confidence in President Khatami's political and economic reforms, and a clear signal of the Iranian people's interest in modernisation.

For us, that is also a vindication of the policy of engagement with Iran pursued by this Government. That policy has attracted some criticism in the past, sometimes from the people who have accepted at face value the propaganda of the NCRI, which is an organisation dominated by the terrorist Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MKO). The MKO are based in Baghdad and are regarded by Saddam Hussein as some of his most trusted allies. They are despised by most Iranians within Iran for their support for Saddam during the Iran/Iraq war in the 1980s. They have been responsible for a series of terrorist attacks in Iran which we have condemned. In our dealings with the Iranian Government we and our EU partners have regularly expressed our concern over a number of issues, particularly human rights, and we will continue to do so until those legitimate concerns are dealt with to our satisfaction. But in assessing those concerns, and the progress of events in Iran generally, we will pay little attention to the views of the MKO or NCRI, whose own background and methods do not permit them to speak with authority on democracy or human rights.

The outcome of the elections strengthens our optimism for the future of Iran, and for Britain's developing relationship with Iran.



## UK Condemns MKO's Mortar Attack

Iran

Mr. McCabe: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received on the affiliations and roles of Ghobad Mansour-Beigi, Reza Molai and Alireza Ali-Hosseini; and what assessment he has made of these reports.

Mr. Hain: According to Iranian press reports, the three people named in my hon. Friend's question were killed during a terrorist attack by the Mujaheddin-e-Khalq Organisation in the border town of Ilam on 9 January. I condemn this latest act of terrorism by the Mujaheddin-e-Khalq Organisation.

Mr. McCabe: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he discussed events in the province of Ilam in Iran when he met the Iranian Foreign Minister.

Mr. Hain: During his recent visit Foreign Minister Kharrazi mentioned an attack by the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq Organisation (MKO) in which several people were killed. Our Embassy in Tehran reported separately that the city of Ilam had been hit by a mortar attack on 8 January which killed three people and injured five. The MKO were reported locally as having claimed responsibility. The UK Government condemn this terrorist attack as we condemn all acts of terrorism, wherever they occur.



## ■ MKO is Despised by Most Iranians

Mr. Hain : ... Some of my hon. Friends may not be aware that NCRI is dominated by the terrorist Mujahedin-e-Khalq organisation, the MKO, which claims responsibility for a number of terrorist attacks in Iran. The NCRI and the MKO are on the USA State Department's proscribed list of terrorist organisations. We do not recognise either of them, neither did the Opposition when they were in government. The MKO is despised by most Iranians—it is important that hon. Members understand that—as it supported Saddam Hussein in the Iran-Iraq war.

The Government believe that it is right to promote human rights, but we must choose the right way of doing so. That means responding to human rights challenges in a way that is most likely to help the people whose freedoms are being restricted. The way in which the case of the Shiraz defendants is dealt with through the appeals process will be a big test of that strategy and of the future of Iran and its people. The eyes of the world will be on Iran. It is important that the Iranian authorities respect the freedoms of those defendants.





## ■ MKO is a Terrorist Organization

Bill Wiggin (Leominster) (Con): What assessment has the Foreign Secretary made of Iran's support for terrorist insurgency groups in Afghanistan's Helmand province?

Mr. Straw: I have seen no evidence of Iranian support for insurgent groups in that province. As is often the case, Iran's record can vary very much, in apparently contradictory ways. Overall, Iran has worked responsibly in respect of its relations with Afghanistan. Iran has good reason for doing so and suffers grievously from the trade in opium; it has been suggested that there are more than 2 million heroin addicts in Iran, fuelled by drugs from Afghanistan. For the time being, on the issue of drugs and in its relationships with Afghanistan, Iran's interests are the same as ours.

Andrew Mackinlay (Thurrock) (Lab): Will the Foreign Secretary take this opportunity to reaffirm the United Kingdom's support for the Iranian resistance people in Camp Ashraf in Iraq, bearing in mind that they have protected person status under the Geneva conventions? Will he confirm that he will resist any attempt by the Iranian Government to make the coalition or the United Kingdom falter upon that commitment?

Mr. Straw: I am sorry to disappoint my hon. Friend but the answer is an emphatic no. The MEK/MKO organisation is a terrorist organisation that is proscribed in this country following a decision that I made as Home Secretary in 2000, which was endorsed by



Parliament. We have a consistent position on terrorist organisations. As I repeatedly make clear to my Iranian counterparts, it is they who have a contradictory position. They ask us to take a firm position in respect of terrorist groups that threaten Iran, and we do; at the same time, Iran is supporting terrorist organisations that threaten Israel. That is unacceptable.

Mr. Brian Binley (Northampton, South) (Con): On the basis of his answer, will the Foreign Secretary give examples of where the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran and its allied bodies have taken any terrorist action against western interests in actual terms?

Mr. Straw: I would need notice of that question. However, like any other organisation similarly proscribed, the MEK/MKO has had every opportunity to make strong representations to the Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission. As it was subsequent to my leaving the Home Office, I cannot remember whether it has done so. If it has, its objections have been overruled. The decision was made by this House on the basis of my recommendation, endorsed by my successors.



## Iran Suffered so Much from MKO's Brutal Bomb Attacks

Iran

8. Sir Teddy Taylor (Rochford and Southend, East) (Con): If he will make a statement on relations with Iran.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): The United Kingdom's relations with Iran are based on a policy of constructive but conditional engagement. We aim to support Iranian efforts to reform, while making clear our concerns about Iran's policies in areas such as its nuclear programme, human rights and its attitude to the middle east peace process.

Sir Teddy Taylor: Does the Secretary of State agree that Iran, which has suffered so much from the brutal bomb attacks from members of the Mujaheddin e-Khalq organisation—the MKO—should have a meaningful role in discussions on the future of its 3,800 members who are housed in Camp Ashraf in Iraq, which is at present protected by US forces? Would not such a step improve relations between Britain and Iran and confirm the US's declared opposition to international terrorism?

Mr. Straw: I fully understand Iran's concern about the MKO, which I, when I was Home Secretary, declared to be a terrorist organisation following the passage of the Terrorism Act 2000.

On the detainees at Camp Ashraf, I should point out to the hon. Gentleman that they are a matter for the Iraqi Government and the United States authorities; the United Kingdom is not directly involved. However, I am well aware of the concerns of the Iranian Government. We have made proper representations in the past to the United States Government and to the Iraqi provisional Government, and we will make those too to the Iraqi Interim Government.



## ■ MKO Has to Be Contained

Sir Teddy Taylor (Rochford and Southend, East) (Con): Would it not be easier for the Government to persuade the Iranians to go along with them if American troops were not providing protection for the Mujaheddin-e-Khalq terrorist organisation, at Camp Ashraf in Iraq? We should bear in mind that the MKO is a proscribed terrorist organisation with an appalling record of killing individuals in Iran.

Mr. Straw: The MEK is a proscribed organisation; indeed, as Home Secretary I proscribed it in the first batch of proscriptions following the Terrorism Act 2000. There are changes in the position of MEK and I should be happy to brief the hon. Gentleman in detail about that. There has been more cooperation, as I think he may have been informed, between the coalition forces in Iraq and the Government of Iran in respect of MEK, which is a nasty terrorist organisation that has to be contained.





## MKO's Record of Violence Extends over Several Decades

MKO (Iran/Iraq)

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the MKO organisation and its aims for Iran; and what estimate he has made of the number of Iranian civilians who have lost their lives following explosions initiated by that organisation.

Mr. Rammell: The Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK or MKO) is a proscribed organisation under the Terrorism Act 2000. It professes to be campaigning for democracy in Iran. But its record of violence extends over several decades. We have no independent confirmation of the number of people who have died at its hands. But the MEK itself has admitted to killing several thousand people since the 1979 revolution in Iran.

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many persons he estimates are resident in the MKO training camp in Iraq; what protection is being given to the camp by the foreign troops in Iraq; and what plans are being made for the location or relocation of the camp residents and the materials in the camp after the transfer of power to the Interim Government in Iraq.

Mr. Rammell: About 3,800 people are detained at Camp Ashraf, the base of the Mojahedin-e Khalq in Iraq. They are under the protection of US forces, who have sole responsibility for them and the camp. Plans for the camp and the detainees during the transition period are a matter for the US authorities and the Iraqi Interim Government.

● House of Commons Debates, June 28, 2004;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmhansrd/vo040628/text/40628w35.htm>



## Iraq and US Mulling over MKO Members' Future

### People's Mojahedin Organisation

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 15 September 2004, Official Report, column 1617, on the People's Mojahedin Organisation, what information has been passed to the UK Government about the status of the residents of Camp Ashraf, with particular reference to the activities of the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran personnel; whether this information has been passed to the Secretary of State for the Home Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rammell: The situation of the residents of Camp Ashraf was until 28 June a matter for the US authorities. The Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) is now responsible for Ashraf. With the concurrence of the IIG, US forces continue to provide security there. The US has informed us that most residents are being treated as protected persons under the Fourth Geneva Convention, some have unresolved claims to be Prisoners of War from the Iran/Iraq war, and a small number are the subject of US or international warrants. The IIG, US and other interested parties are continuing to discuss practical arrangements for their future.

The Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK, or People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran) is proscribed in the UK under the Terrorism Act 2000. We take a close interest in the activities of MEK personnel, and have discussed them on many occasions with foreign Governments, including those of Iran, Iraq and the US. FCO and Home Office officials are in regular contact about the MEK.



## MKO Condoned Violence after 1979 Revolution

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Bill Rammell): ...

Many hon. Members, including my hon. Friends, have raised a number of questions to which I will try to respond. Before I do so, it may be useful for me to outline, in brief, the history of the camp to date. The People's Mujahedeen Organisation of Iran—or Mujaheddin-e-Khalq—was founded in Iran in 1965 with the broad aim of replacing the Shah and the political situation in which he dominated. In its first years, the MEK's main focus was on organisational and ideological work, but in the early 1970s, it carried out violent attacks against the interests of the Shah, his Government and their western allies. After the February 1979 revolution, the MEK continued to condone violence. In the course of 1980 and 1981, the MEK's relationship with the authorities became increasingly hostile and again violent.

Having fled to Paris in 1981, the exiled MEK moved to Iraq and Camp Ashraf in June 1986. The Iraqi regime under Saddam provided land for bases and helped equip the MEK's armed force in Iraq—the National Liberation Army. MEK forces fought on the Iraqi side during the Iran-Iraq war. They claimed responsibility for a series of attacks during the 1990s and a spate of attacks in the early part of 2001 against numerous Iranian targets, both in Iran and around the world. Following the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the MEK turned over its arms to US forces in Camp Ashraf. The legal position was a key issue for the hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Lidington). As I understand it, the US Government's position is that members of the MEK in Camp Ashraf are to be treated as protected persons for the purposes of the fourth Geneva Convention. The UK position has been that as the fourth Geneva Convention ceased to apply in Iraq after 28 June 2004, the designation of "protected persons" under that particular convention could no longer be applicable as 28 June 2004 signified the end of the occupation. However, that does not mean that the residents in the camp are entitled to no protection under Iraqi or international law.

Our view is that we stopped being the occupiers under the Geneva Convention after 28 June 2004. Our obligations as occupiers continued for one year only after the occupation. I mention that because the hon. Gentleman raised that point directly with me. The year starts after 28 June 2004.

● House of Commons Debates, March 25, 2009;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090325/halltext/90325h0003.htm>



## We don't Agree with MKO's Democratic Claims

Mujaheddin-e Khalq

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy towards the People's Mujahedeen Organisation of Iran is in the light of the recent judgment by the European Court of First Instance.

Bill Rammell: On 26 January 2009, taking account of the judgment by the Court of First Instance on 4 December 2008, the General Affairs and External Relations Council adopted a list which did not include the MeK (Mujaheddin-e-Khalq, also known as the People's Mojaheddin of Iran).

However, we remain mindful of the MeK's history as an organisation responsible for a number of serious terrorist attacks—it claimed responsibility for large numbers of violent attacks inside Iran for a number of years, including 96 in a three-month period in early 2001. We do not agree with its claim that it represents a credible democratic opposition in exile.

● House of Lords Debates, April 20, 2009;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200809/ldhansrd/text/90420w0009.htm>

## No Evidence Supports MKO's Allegations

Iraq: Mujahedin-e Khalq

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received of alleged attacks on residents in Ashraf City by members of the Iraqi secret service; and if he will make a statement.

Bill Rammell [holding answer 20 March 2009]: We are aware that such allegations have surfaced in the Iraqi media. We have discussed these allegations with the US, who retain a presence inside Camp Ashraf, and with the Iraqi government. We have seen no evidence to support the allegations.

● House of Commons Debates, April 20, 2009;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090420/text/90420w0118.htm#09042249000556>





## MKO's Democratic Claims Hardly Square with its History of Violence

Iran

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by his Department to engage with the democratic opposition in Iran. [52185]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London and our embassy in Tehran maintain contact with a wide range of Iranians in many different fields. We are seriously concerned about human rights and political freedoms in Iran. Ministers and officials raise our concerns frequently with the Iranian authorities. We also take action through the EU, and in United Nations fora. We maintain a dialogue with those inside and outside the Iranian Government who are working to support reform and the rule of law. As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said in a speech at the International Institute of Strategic Studies on 13 March,

We will not take sides in Iran's internal political debates—these are for Iranians to resolve and they are perfectly capable of doing so themselves. Given their history, Iranians are understandably sensitive about any hint of outside interference. But this does not mean that we should stop standing up for principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms which we hold dear to ourselves and which so many Iranians aspire to: freedom of speech; transparent, genuinely democratic and accountable government; respect for the rights of minorities and women; an independent judiciary".

Ministers and officials have no contact with an organisation proscribed under the Terrorism Act, the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), which purports to be a democratic opposition movement, nor with the National Council for the Resistance of Iran, a group with which it has close links. The MEK has been responsible for numerous attacks resulting in many deaths. Its claims to be a democratic party are hard to square with a history of violence and its authoritarian nature, and it has virtually no support inside Iran.

● House of Commons Debates, March 25, 2009; available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090325/halltext/90325h0003.htm>



## MKO is Responsible for Violent Attacks

Mujahadin-e-Khalk

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to (a) the US and (b) the EU to remove the Mujahadin-e-Khalk (PMOI) from its list of debarred organisations.

Dr. Howells: We have no such plans. The Mojahedin-e Khalq (MeK) is proscribed in the UK under the Terrorism Act 2000. It has a long history of involvement in terrorism in Iran and elsewhere and is, by its own admission, responsible for violent attacks that have resulted in many deaths. The MeK is listed in the US as a foreign terrorist organisation, and it is on the EU's asset freeze list. We welcome this.

● House of Commons Debates, October 31, 2005;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo051031/text/51031w23.htm>

## MKO is a Proscribed Terrorist Organization in the UK

Camp Ashraf

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 29 March 2006, Official Report, columns 1028–9W, on Mujahedin-e Khalq, what the current international status is of members of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organisation at Camp Ashraf in Iraq.

Dr. Howells: It would be necessary to consider the circumstances of individual residents at Camp Ashraf in Iraq to determine their current international status in Iraq. The Government have made no judgment on the international status of any individual at Camp Ashraf. The Mujahedin-e Khalq Organisation is, however, a proscribed terrorist organization in the UK.

● House of Commons Debates, April 18, 2006;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo060418/text/60418w22.htm>



## ■ MKO is not Very Popular inside Iran

Dr. Howells: We have no intention of abrogating any agreements about those people. The MEK is proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000. Its self-imposed exile to Iraq in the 1970s and its support for Saddam Hussein, including during the Iran-Iraq war, means that it is not very popular inside Iran—not even among the Iranian opposition. To answer your question, we have no intention whatever of turning over anyone to the Iranian Government; we believe that they should be treated humanely and that their human rights should be protected, and I have every confidence that they will be. Some have gone back to Iran already, as you know.

● House of Commons Debates, March 14, 2007;  
available at [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmfaaff/363/7031405.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmfaaff/363/7031405.htm)



## British Government Firmly Opposed to Violence Practiced by MKO

Iran

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the use made of the weekly Mojahed publication by (a) the terrorist group Mujaheddin Khalq Organisation of Iran and (b) the National Council of Resistance in Iran; if this publication is registered as a newspaper with the Post Office; and if he will make a statement on the contents of this publication.

Mr. Battle: This Government's position on both the Mujaheddin-e-Khalq Organisation (MKO) and the National Council for the Resistance of Iran (NCRI) is clear. We do not recognise the NCRI, of which the MKO is the dominant group. The British Government remain firmly opposed to the violence practised by the MKO.

We understand that the Mojahed publication is registered as a newspaper with the Post Office. As long as people do not break our laws, they are free to express views with which we might profoundly disagree.



## MKO Portrays itself as a Democratic Entity

Iran

Mr. Temple-Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the National Council of Resistance of Iran; and if he will make a statement. [33714]

Mr. Hanley: It is our long-standing policy not to have any official contact with the National Council of Resistance of Iran. The NCRI is a coalition dominated by the Mojahedin-e-Khalq--MKO--Islamic group, which has a long history of involvement with Iraq.

The MKO has been seeking western support by portraying itself as a "democratic" alternative to the present Iranian regime. It is difficult to reconcile this with the MKO's history of violence. Our European and US partners share our general approach to the MKO. We have no intention of recognising it as an alternative to the present Government in Tehran.

● House of Commons Debates, June 19, 1996;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199596/cmhansrd/vo960619/text/60619w05.htm>





## Government Stops Rajavi from Coming to the UK

Mr. Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will provide assistance to the National Council of Resistance of Iran; (2) what assessment he has made of the objectives and activities of the National Council of Resistance of Iran.

Mr. Fatchett: The Government do not recognise the National Council for the Resistance of Iran, which is a coalition dominated by the Mujaheddin-e-Khalq Organisation (MKO). Despite its claims to be a democratic party, it has a long history of violence. The MKO has been responsible for many acts of terrorism and is closely associated with Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. The Government have taken action to stop people associated with acts of terrorism by the MKO coming to the UK, notably their President elect, Maryam Rajavi. The MKO continues to be listed by the US State Department as a terrorist organisation.

Mr. Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contact (a) he and (b) his officials have had with the National Council of Resistance of Iran. Mr. Fatchett: Neither this nor the previous Government recognise the National Council for the Resistance of Iran (NCRI). Therefore, FCO Ministers and officials avoid contact with member of the NCRI.

● House of Commons Debates, March 1, 1999;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199899/cmhansrd/vo990301/text/90301w29.htm>





## Saddam's Support for MKO Proves its Terrorism Link

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I am not sure that I properly understood my hon. Friend's point. Is he saying that there is no known link between terrorism and Iraq? The Mujahedin-e-Khalq—or MEK—is definitely a terrorist organisation, and we also have clear evidence of Iraqi support for Palestinian suicide Qaeda people in Iraq.

● House of Commons Debates, March 13, 2003;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/vo030311/debtext/30311-13.htm>





## MKO Supported Iraq at the Time of the Invasion of Iran

Sir Teddy Taylor (Rochford and Southend, East) (Con): I shall be as brief as possible. First, I have the highest regard for the integrity of the hon. Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths). He is one of the few Labour Members for whom I would vote, because I know that he is a man of principle, although I disagree fundamentally with his views on Iran. I have had the highest regard for him in many years in the House.

I have three brief points to make. First, we have an obligation to Iran. When we were engaged in discussions about the Iraq invasion I checked quite a bit of material about the war of 1980 to 1988 and the invasion of Iran by Iraq. The plain fact is that the western powers were, at that time, giving full support in every way to Saddam Hussein. I have a list of all the appalling weapons of mass destruction, including anthrax, with which the United States Government provided Saddam Hussein. I mentioned them in our debate on Iraq last March. We have an obligation to appreciate that we are not innocent parties on this issue.

My second point, which I hope the Minister will at least discuss and perhaps study, even if he does nothing about it, relates to today's motion on the European Union. I hope that the Minister will make a special point of carefully considering the Funding for Peace Coalition paper, which I am sure he will have read, on the vast amounts of money that the EU gives to the Palestinian Authority that go straight into funding terrorism. The publication is not simply one of those argumentative pieces, but a pamphlet that goes into great detail. It mentions names, amounts, and how, because of the sheer



inefficiency of the EU in managing its funds, a vast amount of money goes towards the purpose that I mentioned. It says, for example, that 60 per cent of the PA budget was supported by overseas donations, and that, last year, the EU gave £112 million to the PA. It mentions in particular how the funding goes in various ways to al-Aqsa Martyrs and to other terrorist organisations.

Of the many members of the PA-funded militias involved in acts of terror against civilians, including Europeans, the most notable is Marwan Barghouti, the leader of Fatah-Tanzim, who was convicted on charges of murder and yet is still, unbelievably, drawing a salary from the European-supported PA budget. It is all there in great detail in the paper, which I hope the Minister will study. If he has not seen it, I will be glad to give him a copy.

My third point relates to Iran and to the MKO—or MEK—and other terrorist organisations. Here, again, the EU has a responsibility, because the headquarters of those organisations were in France for a time until the EU recognised that they were nasty, serious terrorist organisations, and they left as a result. They went to Iraq, which, as we know, has had an obsession with Iran for many years. First, are they innocent, decent and respectable people? The groups' worldwide campaign against the Iranian Government stresses propaganda and occasionally uses terrorism. In the 1970s, the MKO/MEK killed US military personnel and US civilians working on defence projects in Tehran. It also supported the 1979 takeover of the US embassy in Tehran.

In 1981, the MKO/MEK placed bombs in the head office of the Islamic Republican party and the Premier's office that killed some 70 high-ranking Iranian officials.

Mr. Griffiths: Unfortunately, there are different truths on either side of the fence in all these activities—let us call them wars. The People's Mujahedin of Iran, or the followers of Mr Rajavi, were not accused of the particular incident to which the hon. Gentleman refers until some time afterwards. In fact, the Iranian Government originally accused other elements of that attack. They focused on the supporters of Mr Rajavi only later, for, I believe, political purposes.

Sir Teddy Taylor: I fully appreciate that there are different views. That is why I do not go in for propaganda on these issues. I do not listen to what organisations say, but take different quotations provided by the Library's research department. All I can say is that I have the full details of all the activities provided by the Library, which is excellent when one is trying to find out the truth, as the hon. Gentleman will know. I will be only too glad to give him all this information if he so wishes.



On the question of the MKO/MEK and its activities in Iran, I have the paper that I mentioned. I urge anyone to read it before they take a firm line on the matter, as it details the people involved in terrorism. The hon. Gentleman and I took out for a meal a gentleman who was sentenced to, I believe, 33 years' imprisonment for killing two children in one of these activities. Sadly, the paper details a huge number of the organisation's activities that involve terrorism. That is frightening, and we should not ignore it.

Time is short, so I shall make only two more points. First, does the Minister accept that by and large Iran has a good reputation in many areas? I was impressed—this might surprise people—to find out that while some Arab countries have terrible problems in religious matters, in Iran we saw a synagogue—there are five. There is a large Jewish community, which has freedom to worship, and there are many Christian churches. I met the people coming out of one of them and asked whether they had any problems. They replied, "Absolutely none."

My second point is about the nuclear issue. I accept that it is always difficult to arrive at the truth in such matters. However, the only way in which we can make progress is to treat countries with respect. Could the Government not suggest that there might be merit in calling a conference to promote the middle east as an atomic-free zone? That would involve Israel and others in getting rid of atomic weapons, but it would be a way of making progress, which will not happen if things continue as they are.

Finally, is there not a case for the Government to make it abundantly clear that the terrorist organisation MKO has little support in Iran? The impression I gained—I am in no sense an expert—was that public opinion, which used to be supportive to an extent, turned against it because, unfortunately, the MEK and the MKO supported Iraq at the time of the invasion of Iran. There is no question—there are detailed allegations in a House of Commons paper—but that they not only gave it support but were involved in the armed conflict. What is the Minister's assessment of the support of the people of Iran for that organisation? My impression is that it is meaningless.

My final point is about universities. We had the pleasure of visiting some. I was impressed to find out that university education is a big factor in Iran. Many people attend, and receive free education—unlike those in the United Kingdom, who have to pay a great deal. Remarkably, more than half the students were women. Speaking to the students, I got the impression that the universities, far from being extreme organisations putting forward extremist views, are highly motivated educational institutions.



I hope that the Government will take a positive attitude towards Iran. It has a form of democracy. Although it is not total, there is an elected parliament and an elected president, and public opinion counts for a great deal. After the cases in which people were prevented from standing—we met one of them—we were told that it was thought that that would never happen again because of the public response.

My final point—I recognise that I have made a final point three times—is that one gets an impression of a country by walking around its streets. There are some deplorable countries in the middle east, where I feel terrified to walk, but in Iran my general impression was of a civilised society with high standards. I hope that the Minister will make it clear that we will not co-operate in any way with terrorist organisations, and that we respect Iran for the many positive developments there.

● House of Commons Debates, October 19, 2004;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmhansrd/vo041019/halltext/41019h01.htm>

## Training for Terrorism, the Basic Task of Camp Ashraf Residents

Iran

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—[Joan Ryan.]

7.2 pm

Sir Teddy Taylor (Rochford and Southend, East) (Con): ...

The second issue that I wish to raise is important. I hope that the Government will also say something about a subject that is causing huge concern in Iran itself. I refer to the protection that is being given to the MKO's terrorist training camps in Iraq. I understand that, following strong representations, tanks and other large weapons were removed from the site, but the fact is that there are a substantial number of people in the camp in Iraq—at one time, there were no fewer than 3,800 terrorists whose basic task was to train for terrorism. I have spoken to persons who were formerly involved in appalling terrorist activities and who now regret all that they did, and it seems that it was a highly organised and effective terrorist operation.

The camp is called Camp Ashraf and I have seen many details of the quite appalling



events that the MKO has been involved in Iran itself. Irresponsibility is typical of terrorist organisations throughout the world, and it is abundantly clear that the MKO has no aim whatsoever apart from that of creating chaos and horror within Iran.

The basic problem is what on earth we can do with the trainees in Camp Ashraf. I would have thought that the most obvious and clear answer would be to arrange for people from independent organisations, such as the United Nations, to interview every one of the activists on their own and to ask them whether they wished to carry on with their activities or to return to Iran on the basis of a clear policy of forgiveness that the Iranian Government have announced. Once this has been completed, I think the most obvious step for the western powers to take is to remove all weaponry from the terrorists concerned. Of course, I appreciate that terrorists can always obtain more weapons, but we must do something if we have regard for those who have lost relatives, and particularly children, as a result of the MKO's terrorist activities and who hear that the terrorists still have weapons under the United States' supervision.

At one time, the organisation had camps that were equipped with tanks, guns and helicopter gunships. Although some of the weapons have been removed, it is important for us to face up to the basic issue of interviewing each terrorist or trainee and at least removing their weaponry. It would make a difference to the relationships of Britain and the US with Iran if we could make it abundantly clear that we are facing up to the matter and taking it as seriously as we should.





## 'MKO Never Publicly Given Up Violence'

David Miliband: We were deeply disappointed by the result, given the well documented history of terrorist attacks involving the MEK. I am happy to give details. It explicitly claimed responsibility for a number of serious acts of terrorism on Iranian interests for a number of years. [Interruption.] It has never publicly given up violence and gave up its arms only in the face of overwhelming military might in Iraq in 2003. [Interruption.] None the less, my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Andrew Mackinlay) will be pleased to hear that we will of course abide by the ruling of the court, and I understand that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will lay an order before Parliament in the next few weeks to take forward that judgment.

● House of Commons Debates, May 13, 2008;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080513/debtext/80513-0001.htm>





## Draft Terrorism Act 2000 (Proscribed Organisations) (Amendment) Order 2008 Approved

### Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism

The Minister for Security, Counter-Terrorism, Crime and Policing (Mr. Tony McNulty):  
I beg to move,

That the draft Terrorism Act 2000 (Proscribed Organisations) (Amendment) Order 2008, which was laid before this House on 21st May, be approved.

The People's Mujaheddin Organisation of Iran, or PMOI, is opposed to the Iranian Government, and its stated aim is to replace that regime with a secular democracy. Most of its members are based at Camp Ashraaf, which is in Iraq, and under Saddam's regime it operated as a de facto wing of the Iraqi military. Although it currently describes itself as a non-violent democratic movement, there can be no doubt that the PMOI was responsible for vile acts of terrorism over a long period, stretching back some two decades prior to 2001. Those were not acts attributed to the PMOI by the Iranian authorities; it expressly admitted responsibility for a number of horrendous crimes carried out against the Iranian people, aimed at both civilian and military targets. The PMOI is not widely supported in Iran, because of those attacks, and because it fought alongside Iraqi forces against Iran in the war between the two countries.

The PMOI says that it decided to renounce violence at an internal meeting in 2001, and that it now seeks instead to pursue its objectives by peaceful means. Indeed, it has not conducted any attacks since then, although it has not made any public statement renouncing violence. Until 2003 it maintained an extensive arsenal at Camp Ashraaf, at which point it found itself surrounded by United States forces and surrendered its arms.

Keith Vaz (Leicester, East) (Lab): Can the Minister confirm that he has had discussions with the Foreign Office about this matter, and that it agrees wholeheartedly with his decision to present the order to the House today?

Mr. McNulty: The position taken by the Government to date is the position of the entire Government. When we proscribe organisations in an international rather than a domestic context, of course we consult Departments across Government, including the Foreign Office, whose position is in accord with ours.

The PMOI was added to the list of proscribed terrorist organisations in 2001. We con-



sider proscription to be a tough but necessary power. Its effect is that the proscribed organisation is outlawed and unable to operate in the United Kingdom. The consequence of proscription is that specific criminal offences apply in relation to a proscribed organisation. They include membership of the organisation and various forms of support, including organising or addressing a meeting and wearing or displaying an article indicating membership of the organisation. Further criminal offences exist in relation to fundraising and various uses of money and property for the purposes of terrorism.

A group of 35 interested parties, consisting of Members of this House and of the other place, disagreed with the PMOI's proscription. A statutory procedure exists for any proscribed organisation, or anyone affected by the proscription of an organisation, to apply to the Home

Secretary for that organisation to be de-proscribed. The group followed that procedure correctly, and wrote to the Home Secretary requesting that the PMOI be de-proscribed. It argued that it was no longer concerned in terrorism, having renounced violence and disarmed, and that its desire to express its legitimate support for the PMOI and its objectives was being unlawfully curtailed by its continuing proscription.

The then Home Secretary considered the application carefully, but continued to believe that the PMOI was concerned in terrorism, which is the statutory test for proscription. He formed that view in the light of the PMOI's lengthy history of violence, in the absence of any public renunciation of violence, and taking into account the fact that it had disarmed some two years after the decision to renounce violence, and only when it had no other choice in the face of the overwhelming force of the US military.

Bob Russell (Colchester) (LD): Does the Minister accept that history is full of organisations that once practised violence in support of their beliefs and subsequently followed the democratic process? They include—closer to home—Sinn Féin-IRA, and various liberation movements in what was formerly the Empire and is now the Commonwealth.

Mr. McNulty: I would accept that, but I remind the hon. Gentleman that the IRA is still a proscribed organisation. I discussed this just before these two debates began. I do not think that Sinn Féin was ever formally proscribed. I do accept the broad historic point that the hon. Gentleman has made, but I do not accept—if this is what he subsequently asserts—that the PMOI is in the position that he has described, and the Government do not accept it either.

Mike Gapes (Ilford, South) (Lab/Co-op): I do not know whether my right hon. Friend is aware that the Foreign Affairs Committee went to Iran in November last year, but one



of the things that struck us then was the Iranian regime's absolute obsession with this organisation. My right hon. Friend says that it has no influence in Iran, and I think that he is probably right; nevertheless, the Iranian Government are completely obsessed with the Mujaheddin-e-Khalq, the PMOI, or whatever name we choose to give it. They even tried to organise a televised meeting between us and victims of MEK terrorism.

Mr. McNulty: I take my hon. Friend's description of the Committee's visit to Iran at face value. As I have said, my right hon. Friend the then Home Secretary considered the application carefully, but continued to believe that the PMOI—or the MEK, as my hon. Friend rightly calls it—was still concerned in terrorism. That is the statutory test for proscription, as opposed to what other countries may think.

Mr. Andrew Dismore (Hendon) (Lab) rose—

Mr. David Drew (Stroud) (Lab/Co-op) rose—

Mr. McNulty: I shall be happy to give way shortly. I am always—I hope—quite generous in giving way. Let me make some progress first, however. The points that my hon. Friends wish to make will not go away, given the theme that runs throughout the debate.

While accepting that there had been no attacks since 2001, the then Home Secretary adopted a cautious approach. He was not satisfied that the renunciation of violence was more than a temporary cessation for pragmatic reasons, or that the 2003 disarmament would have taken place had it not been for the military position in Iraq and the artificially restrictive circumstances arising from it. He was concerned that the PMOI might return to terrorism as a means to achieving its objectives in the future if the situation in Iraq made possible for it to do so, and if doing so became strategically advantageous.

Mr. Drew: It is good to hear my right hon. Friend welcome the de-proscription so wholeheartedly, but I want to know where the evidence comes from. Perhaps this will be made clear during the wider debate, but I should be interested to know what representations the Government of Iran have made about the PMOI.

Mr. McNulty: As I have said, what my right hon. Friend the then Home Secretary had to consider was the application from the 35 interested parties for de-proscription. His first port of call was the evidence submitted in support of putting the MEK, or PMOI, on the list of proscribed organisations in the first place.

This decision was not taken lightly. The Government share the desire of those 35 Members of both Houses to see the advance of democracy and the promotion of human rights around the world. Given the wide-ranging impact of proscription, we are committed to ensuring that proscription decisions are lawful and proportionate.

The Terrorism Act 2000 sets out the definition of terrorism and the criteria for



considering whether an organisation is concerned in terrorism. The Act does not refer to the motivation or political agenda of those who perpetrate acts of terrorism and, as the Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission accepted, the Secretary of State is entitled to conclude that there is no right to resort to terrorism, whatever the motivation. We do not condone terrorism anywhere, whatever its justification or its target. These decisions must be evidentially based, however; we must not use this part of the Act to proscribe those whom we do not like. There have been many debates, and many foolish comments have been made from the Opposition Front Bench—although not by the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Mr. Ruffley), I freely admit—about a particular organisation, and the idea that its remaining unproscribed somehow shows a lack of willingness to engage with, and be tough on, terrorism. Clear criteria and processes are laid down, and the Home Secretary's refusal to de-proscribe was appealed to POAC, which upheld the appeal and found that the PMOI was no longer an organisation concerned in terrorism. POAC directed that the Government lay an order before the House de-proscribing the PMOI, which brings us to where we are now.

Mr. Dismore: The Minister has said that the Government had concerns about the PMOI when the former Home Secretary proscribed it and then resisted the application for de-proscription; indeed, the Government resisted that case through the judicial process. Is my right hon. Friend now satisfied that the PMOI is not engaged in terrorism, and that it has not been since 2001, and that there is no prospect of its returning to terrorism? In other words, does he fully and completely accept the findings of the judicial process?

● House of Commons Debates, June 23, 2008;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080623/debtext/80623-0016.htm>

Mr. McNulty: It is almost as if my hon. Friend was looking over my shoulder at the next paragraph of my speech.

Although POAC considered that the Government were wrong to refuse to de-proscribe the PMOI in 2006, it did agree that the original proscription was justified in 2001 and that the PMOI was responsible for many terrorist attacks over an extended period. It also stated that the Government were entitled to place little credibility on public statements made by the PMOI as its public statements contained—heaven forbid—“spin”, and the evidence submitted in the course of the hearing was “contradictory and potentially misleading” and demonstrated “a shifting approach”.

Our subsequent application for permission to appeal POAC's ruling to the Court of Appeal was refused. While disappointed with this decision, we have complied with the



judgment and have moved quickly to lay the order that the House is debating today. It will give effect to POAC's order and remove the PMOI from the list of proscribed organisations. However, my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon (Mr. Dismore) can take both my tone and our desire to appeal POAC's decision to mean that we are not satisfied that the PMOI is no longer a terrorist organisation.

Keith Vaz: Bearing in mind that the Government lost in the courts and that the purpose of our debate today is to put the legislation right, have the Government reconsidered any of their other decisions on proscription? Is it possible that they have got decisions wrong in other cases as well?

Mr. McNulty: Let me reiterate that simply because POAC arrived at its decision—we accept it in full, which is why the order is before us—does not mean we accept that POAC is right and our original position is wrong; we profoundly do not. Our job is simply to review constantly who is on, and who should be on, the proscribed list. There is nothing in this judgment that leads us to think that we should review all the other organisations on the proscribed list.

Andrew Mackinlay (Thurrock) (Lab): The Minister needs to share with Parliament the fact that there were at least two days of closed session both at POAC and in the Court of Appeal, and that no less a person than the Lord Chief Justice of England said in his judgment that the two days of closed session with special advocates served only to reinforce his view that the decision of the Home Secretary was perverse. The Government had their opportunity in court with special advocates, and were found wanting not on one occasion but on two occasions: before POAC and before the Court of Appeal.

Mr. McNulty: And, as I have said, we sought to appeal POAC's ruling, which gives a clear indication of the Government's continued position. Perfectly fairly, that was refused, and while disappointed with that decision, we have complied with the judgment and moved quickly to lay the order that the House is debating today, which gives effect to POAC's order and removes the PMOI from the list of proscribed organisations. That is entirely in keeping with the POAC ruling, and I commend the order to the House.

● House of Commons Debates, June 23, 2008;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080623/debtext/80623-0018.htm>

Mr. McNulty: First, the Government have always argued that the Secretary of State was entitled to take a cautious approach when considering the PMOI's application for de-proscription. No one, not least POAC, argues that when the original proscription



was made in 2001, it was not a terrorist organisation. Indeed, the POAC judgment says that there were reasonable grounds for the belief of the Secretary of State that the PMOI was “concerned in terrorism” at the date that it was originally proscribed, 29 March 2001.

As I tried to show in my introductory remarks, it is the PMOI’s assertion—we would say—from 2003 onwards that it had forsaken the armed struggle. Versus POAC’s ultimate decision to take that at face value, the Government took the more cautious approach that it was not the case. The notion that we are dealing with some wonderful little gang of democrats who have never raised arms in anger, or taken terrorist action, is erroneous and not the case at all. Our contention was that, given its long and active history of committing acts of terrorism, and its

failure publicly to renounce terrorism or voluntarily surrender its weapons, it should remain proscribed, on the criteria that it remains involved, or potentially involved, in terrorism, and no more.

Chris Huhne: Has the Minister heard anyone in the House today suggest that the PMOI was a gang of democrats that never lifted an arm in anger? I have not heard that.

Mr. McNulty: It was certainly the assertion of the hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Amess) and at least part of the contention of my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Drew), as we will be able to see in Hansard. I am terribly sorry if this disappoints, but it is our duty: we will not hesitate to re-proscribe the PMOI if circumstances change and evidence emerges that it is concerned in terrorism. It is not some reckless cat-and-mouse game, but our duty and responsibility under the legislation. That is all there is to it.

To reiterate the point of my right hon. Friend the Chairman of the Home Affairs Committee, the judgment relates solely to the PMOI and has no direct effect on the proscription of other organisations. We have already strengthened our processes for reviewing the proscription of organisations and dealing with applications for their de-proscription, and will of course consider those again in the light of the judgment.

Bob Russell: Is the Minister giving a clue to how the article appeared in The Times today?

Mr. McNulty: I do not need to give clues; I shall come on to that point. Our role, job and responsibility is to keep organisations that we feel are involved in terrorism under review. I know of no dealings with the Americans in this regard, but, as hon. Members have said, it is quite proper that the PMOI is listed under EU common position 931, based on a national competent authority decision that we discuss in detail the consequences of the de-proscription order. We will discuss with our European Union partners the implications of the United Kingdom de-proscription in the light of the



EU list, as my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud suggested. I think that that was a perfectly fair point.

All groups under consideration for proscription or de-proscription are kept under review. There is no substance in the story in today's Times. As I have said on other occasions when we have dealt with proscription orders, I will not be giving the House or, more important, the organisations concerned due notice of whether we are going to proscribe them. I think Members will understand that, given the nature of the circumstances. However, although we do not normally discuss whether groups are being considered for proscription, I can say in response to the Times article that there are currently no plans to proscribe the National Resistance Army of Iran. I can also say that with de-proscription comes a watching brief from the Government, not least because of our position on these matters, churlish or otherwise. We still favour the cautious approach.

Let me say again to the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds that if the group resorts to terrorism and the evidence is clear that it meets the statutory test under law and no more, we will consider the case for re-proscription. My hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Andrew Mackinlay) said that the PMOI had been given no opportunity to prove that it was not a terrorist organisation, and quoted from a 400-page judgment. Nothing in the law has impeded the PMOI from applying for de-proscription, or any interested party from doing so on its part. Such applications give organisations the opportunity to provide evidence that they are not concerned in terrorism.

Andrew Mackinlay: That was not my point. My point was that the PMOI and related organisations had knocked on the Government's door and said "Dear British Government, what can we do to demonstrate that we have demilitarised? What would you like us to show you?", and that their request had received no response. That was my point, and it is a simple one. It is history now, because we are going to pass the motion unanimously, but my right hon. Friend should not try to rewrite history.

Mr. McNulty: It is not the Government's job to tell a proscribed organisation what it needs to do to be de-proscribed. That is absolute nonsense. POAC concluded that there was no credible support for the assertion that an agreement had been reached with Iran pursuant to which the PMOI would remain proscribed, still less for the assertion that it would remain proscribed even if the statutory criterion for proscription was not fulfilled. My hon. Friend has thrown around wonderful words like "appeasement" and "reckless". As ever, he has been very nice and very loud, but very wrong.

I can tell the hon. Member for Southend, West that we shall not be meeting the PMOI, because we do not consider it to be a credible opposition group. We also have no plans to meet members of the National Council of Resistance of Iran. Nor—if I may



deal with another of my hon. Friend's points—do we agree with the assertion that the PMOI/MEK or the NCRI constitutes the Iranian Government in exile. I repeat that the PMOI's terrorist acts resulted in the deaths of many Iranian citizens. It fought against Iran during the Iran-Iraq war, and we see no evidence of popular support for either organisation.

The judgment turns on our cautious approach. Given the history of the organisation since 2003, we simply do not believe that its intent is entirely passive and peaceful. POAC's judgment, to which it is entitled, is that the organisation's assertions that it is no longer involved in terrorism and taking up arms are genuine and that it should therefore be de-proscribed. In the light of that judgment, we presented the order as quickly as we could. I hope that it will be passed unanimously, as forecast by my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock—and I do not doubt that Members will rush out of the Chamber and start rewriting history as we speak.

I commend the order to the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker—and in passing, and not in connection with this very serious matter, I wish you a very happy birthday for what remains of it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am obliged to the right hon. Gentleman.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Terrorism Act 2000 (Proscribed Organisations) (Amendment) Order 2008, which was laid before this House on 21st May, be approved.





## Iran's Supreme Leader was Blown in Half by MKO

Mr. Wallace: ... I disagree with the hon. Member for Thurrock and my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, South (Mr. Binley) about the Mujahidin-e-Khalq or PMOI. None of the millions who protested in the streets was protesting for the restoration of the MEK, and no one wanted the PMOI to be allowed a role in Iranian politics. The Supreme Leader—the second President—was blown in half by the PMOI. It is a Marxist organisation. It has not been active because its people have been sitting in a camp after fighting for Saddam Hussein in Iraq. I do not want Her Majesty's Government to do business with such an organisation. As in Iraq, we must ask ourselves whether our enemy's enemy is our friend. Have we forgotten the lessons of history? We should be very careful with whom we do business.

Let us remember that the US re-proscribed the PMOI in February. We only have to read the evidence, which is submitted and published online, to realise that the US has not moved much on the PMOI.

Mr. Wallace: ... Interestingly, Oman, one of Britain's partners in the gulf, recently signed a security pact with Iran. On one hand, Britain is about to sell two new frigates to Oman, but on the other, Oman has just signed a security pact with Iran. Where are we going? We need to ensure that we have a united voice and put a lot of effort into getting there. I do not believe in regime change through the MEK or terrorist organisations. That would take us to the wrong place, as the example of Iraq shows. Relying on intelligence is often unreliable.

● House of Commons Debates, July 9, 2009;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090709/halltext/90709h0004.htm>  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090709/halltext/90709h0005.htm>



## MKO acted as Saddam's Death Squads

Mr. Wallace: ... How do we build trust? We can start by accepting that whatever we think of the Iranian Government, we must accept that they are a legitimate authority. Even among Iranians who oppose the Islamic revolution or the current President, there is an acceptance that the Government in Tehran rules by consent. We should not engage in regime change or seek to subvert the Administration. If necessary, we should be prepared to guarantee their security. We must recognise that Iran has rights, while at the same time supporting all its peoples' rights—and by "all" I mean rights relating to faiths, genders and race. Iranian rights and human rights can be compatible.

There are other issues that need resolving. At home, we are faced with pressure from some to de-proscribe the terrorist group the Mujaheddin-e-Khalq—or the People's Mujahedeen Organisation of Iran. The PMOI group has been active in terrorism since the 1970s, both inside and outside Iran. We should not forget that in the 1970s, it killed a number of US citizens and supported the storming of the embassy in Tehran. As well as acting as Saddam's death squads inside and outside Iraq, the PMOI has consistently waged attacks on the Iranian Government. As recently as January this year, the US Department of State reconfirmed the MEK as being a foreign terrorist organisation. I know that the UK Government support that listing and I implore them to keep the group proscribed, whatever it takes.

● House of Commons Debates, December 13, 2011;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm111213/debtext/111213-0002.htm>

## West Often Looks to Wrong Allies in Middle East

Mr Wallace: Absolutely. They do so less and less each day, and that is one of the major regrets for someone such as me who believes that Iran has a great future and that the west often looks to the wrong allies in the middle east in the long term. I disagree, however, with the position on the Mujahedin-e Khalq. I believe that if one of the few things the Iranians and the Americans both agree on is that the MEK should be a proscribed terrorist organisation, we should perhaps maintain that.

● House of Commons Debates, December 13, 2011;  
available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm111213/debtext/111213-0002.htm>



## Saddam Supported MKO Activities Against Iran

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the terrorist groups he believes to have links with the Iraqi Government.

The Prime Minister: Iraq has a long record of support for terrorism; this includes support for radical Islamic groups such as the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, Palestinian terrorist groups (e.g. Abu Nidal), the activities of the MeK against Iran, payments to the families of suicide bombers as well as the assassination of political opponents in Iraq and abroad. Saddam Hussein tried to assassinate President Bush and the Emir of Kuwait in 1993.

For links with al-Qaeda, I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the right hon. Member for Ross, Skye and Inverness West (Mr. Kennedy) in the House on 5 February 2003, Official Report, columns 265–66.







## MKO Carried Out Security Missions for the IIS

### M22, Directorate of Protective Services

The Directorate of Protective Services was similar in composition to a light infantry battalion and it protected IIS facilities along with the Ba'th Party national leadership. Its most recent director prior to OIF was Khassam Ibrahim Omar Ayyub Al Tikriti. M22 provided external security at IIS sites, while M6 handled internal security issues—similar to the way that the SRG and SSO handled security at presidential palaces.

Three subordinate divisions in M22 carried out various physical security missions for the IIS (Iraqi Intelligence Service) Headquarters in Baghdad, the Mujahiddin è Khaliq (Iranians opposed to the current Iranian Regime), and the IIS Regional Offices (M51 through M59). M22 personnel guarded all IIS safehouses, and M22 personnel may have been present in the event of the transportation of WMD materiel, because it had previously provided convoy security for the shipment of light weapons.



## IIS Directorate 18 Give Orders for MKO Ops in Iraq

### Directorate 14. Special Operations

**T**he Special Operations [14th] Directorate, located in Salman Pak 20 km south-east of Baghdad, is one of the most important and largest in Mukhabarat. This directorate undertakes the most secret and sensitive special operations outside the country. They were responsible for the attempted assassination against President Bush, and the assassination of Talib Al Suheil. It conducts joint operations with the Mujahideen Khalq Organisation, and undertakes training of specially selected officers for this type of operation. The current Director is Brig Nouri Al Douri (Abu Ibrahim).

### Directorate 18. Iran

This directorate is responsible for the Mujahideen Khalq Organisation (MKO). This directorate issues the orders and tasks for MKO operations in Iraq, Iran and other countries. The Director of D18 is Brig Ihsan Al Timmimi (Syed Ihsan), and the Assistant Director of D18 is Col Ali Bilal Hussein Al Dulaimi.

● John Pike, "Iraqi Intelligence Service - IIS [Mukhabarat]," FAS, November 26, 1997; available at <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/iraq/mukhabarat/org.htm>



## MKO is not Very Popular inside Iran



In a letter dated October 13, 2004, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry's Department of Neighboring Countries told the Iranian embassy in Baghdad that they had gathered documents showing MKO's involvement with the assassination of the embassy's first secretary, Mr. Khalil Na'aimi, in Baghdad.

Foreign Ministry of Iraq, October 12, 2004

## MKO Presence in Iraq is Illegal

**R**egular Session of the Iraqi Governing Council No. 65

Date: Tuesday, December 9, 2003

Agenda: Investigating the issue of terrorist groups whom the former regime allowed in the country.

...

According to the previous decisions of Governing Council regarding the terrorist organizations whom the former Ba'ath regime allowed their activities inside Iraq, the Iraqi transitional government announces that the presence of Mujahedin-e Khalq terrorist organization is illegal inside Iraq and all the members of the Organization must be expelled until June 30, 2004. Members of the Organization will be prosecuted if they refuse to leave.



## Statement of Iraqi Parliament's Human Rights Commission about MKO

Investigating the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization and its international and internal aspects and with regards to complexity of this case and its relationship with territorial integrity and independence of the country and international treaties and also with observing the international standards in dealing with these issues, the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee came to the following conclusions on November 24, 2011:

1. Human Rights Commission emphasizes the expulsion of Mujahedin-e Khalq outside of Iraq;
2. The government and United Nations are responsible for putting an end to the issue of the Organization's relocation based on the timing and criteria;
3. The Commission underlines the integrity of government institutions and political parties in this regard;
4. Human Rights Commission attempts to contact with relevant bodies like the government and the UN to know about their viewpoints with regards to the relocation of Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization outside of the country as well as the relocation strategies and necessary schedule.



## Iraqi Parliamentarians Vote against MKO

In the 38th session of the Iraqi Parliament, the majority of parliamentarians voted in favor of the following paragraphs on Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization:

The bill had three paragraphs:

1. The Government should take necessary steps for their expulsion outside Iraq.
2. The Government should deal with the members of the Organization according to legal necessities specified to these people and prevent them from perpetrating activities detrimental to national security.
3. A joint staff made up of the Parliament's Security and Defense Committee and the Legal Committee in charge of the case is responsible for tracking the implementation of the bill by the government.



## Nujaifi Urges the Expulsion of MKO Outside Iraq

الرئيس النجفي يبحث مع رئيسة مجلس النواب العراقية العلاقات الثنائية بين البلد وعضد من الشخصيات الهامة في بريطانيا

الأربعاء 12 تشرين الأول 2011

التقى رئيس مجلس النواب العراقي نسمية عبدالعزيز النجفي اليوم الأربعاء برئيسة مجلس النواب العراقي البارونة دي سوزا في قصر ويست منستر في العاصمة لندن ضمن سلسلة اللقاءات التي يجريها الوفد البرلماني العراقي المتواجد هناك. ويعد اللقاء خلال اللقاء الوضع العام في كلا من العراق وبريطانيا، كما تبادلوا التلغات المهمة ذات الصلة بالعلاقات العراقية البريطانية، واتفقا على تطوير العلاقات البرلمانية بين البلدين الصديقين. وأكد الرئيس النجفي خلال اللقاء على "أهمية الاستفادة من التجربة الديمقراطية العراقية في المملكة المتحدة وخبرات التجارب البرلمانية في بريطانيا".

من جهتها، اشادت الرئيسة دي سوزا بداء البرلمان العراقي في دولته الحالية. وفي لقاء آخر، التقى الوفد البرلماني العراقي برئاسة النجفي مع مجموعة برلمانية برئاسة البارونة ليكسون والتي رحيبت بوفدنا برئاسة رئيس وأعضاء الوفد العراقي معربة عن سعادتها الفاعرة بهذا اللقاء. من جهته، أكد الرئيس النجفي ان "هذه الزيارة هي فرصة لتطوير علاقاتنا مع المملكة المتحدة، وإيجاد أفضل السبل لتوطيد هذه العلاقة".

كما قدم سبائته أعضاء الوفد العراقي مؤكدا شوعه التكتوي والمكوثي ومثيدا بالروابط الصميمة، والخطاب المشترك الذي يجمعهم في المسائل الجوهرية والاستراتيجية ذات الصلة بخاض الوطن ومستقبله. وأوضح الرئيس النجفي ان "العراق مر بطورف صعب، ويصطدم حاليا بتحديات خطيرة وجمة، ولكن الإرادة موجودة لتخطي هذه المعوقات من أجل بناء وطن سعيد ودولة عصرية بعيدة عن ترانكات الماضي وارتكازات الحاضر، ولذا أتى دور البرلمان في تصحيح المساربات الخاطئة، وديمومة ركائز الديمقراطية، منوها إلى حاجة العراق لدعم دولي وفكرات في مجال الديمقراطية لأن التحول من الدكتاتورية إلى النظام الديمقراطي يحتاج إلى ثقافة وإلى همة عالية، وإلى استنور يضمن ذلك، ومن هنا كان ولاد من اجراء تعديلات ضرورية في الدستور ليكفيل نفسه مع التطورات والمتغيرات الحاصلة في المجتمع".

من جهته طرح الوفد البرلماني البريطاني العديد من التساؤلات، منها مسئلة مجاهدي خلق الإيرانية وممسك اشراق، إذ أكد الرئيس النجفي ان "مجلس النواب يؤيد قرار الحكومة لقتلهم بإجلاهم إلى دولة لكثة". كما تم طرح المزيد من الاستفسارات والتساؤلات حول انتهاكات حقوق الإنسان في العراق ولغا لتتقرير الأهمية. هذا وقد اشادت المجموعة البرلمانية البريطانية بدور البرلمان العراقي البناء والمطاء وعلى رأسه الرئيس النجفي بمطابقته بمتنخلق لدى الحكومة العراقية لتموافقة على زيارة وفد برلماني بريطاني لمسعر اشراق، كما طابوا بتمدية العلاقات البرلمانية وتبادل الزيارات بين البلدين مع رغبتهم الشديدة بتعين مسير عراقى في لندن.

المكتب الاعلامي  
لرئيس مجلس النواب العراقي  
12-10-2011

أرسل هذا المقال لصديق لي صفحة للتبليغة

In a meeting with the leader of the House of Lords, Osama al-Nujefi, on behalf of the parliament, confirmed the decision of the government of the country to expel Mujahedin-e Khalq to a third country.



## Suhail Underlines Negative Role of MKO in Iraq

During a meeting with the EU delegation, Iraqi parliamentary first deputy speaker Qusay al-Suhail discussed the negative role of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization during the previous years in Iraq.

The screenshot shows the official website of the Iraqi Parliament (Majlis al-Nawab). The header includes the Iraqi flag and the text 'جمهورية العراق' (Republic of Iraq) and 'مجلس النواب' (House of Representatives). Below the header is a navigation bar with links in Arabic and English. The main content area features a news article titled 'المكثور السهيل يبحث مع بعثة الاتحاد الأوروبي في العراق الأوضاع السياسية في العراق والمنطقة' (The Speaker al-Suhail discusses with the EU delegation in Iraq the political situation in Iraq and the region). The article is dated 'الأربعاء 01 صباط 2012' (Wednesday, 1st of Sabat, 2012). The article text discusses the negative role of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) in Iraq during the previous years. The sidebar on the left contains various links and categories, including 'الكثلة النيابية' (Parliamentary Groups), 'رئيس الديوان' (President of the Council of Representatives), 'اللجان' (Committees), 'أحدث التشريعات' (Latest Legislation), and 'القوانين' (Laws).



## Sudani Urges EU States to Take MKO Members in Their Borders



In his meeting with the Head of EU Delegation to Iraq Ms. Jana Hybaskova, Iraqi Minister of Human Rights Muhammad Al-Sudani urged the EU states to provide the necessary facilities for the asylum of members of the Organisation in their countries.

Jana Hybaskova appreciated the efforts of Iraqi Human Rights Ministry in relocation of members of the organization from Camp Ashraf to Camp Liberty.



## Zuhairi Slams Pro-MKO Remarks

Addressing the 18th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Iraqi deputy minister of human rights Hussein Jasim Nasser Al-Zuhairi strongly denounced the pro-MKO remarks of a non-government group in international fora.

He further detailed the clash between Iraqi police and elements of the organization which resulted to the injuries of both sides.





## Iraq Treats MKO According to International Standards

Regarding the entering to the Camp Ashraf on April 8, the Iraqi Government has acted according to international standards. After the January 1, 2009, Iraq took control of Camp Ashraf and the Government's behavior with them was according to human rights criteria. Moreover, the US forces who were located at the northern part of Ashraf had the issue under supervision.

In the 2009 incident, which led to the death of 36 Camp Ashraf residents, there are no references in the reports to the casualties of Iraqi police forces. The issue is about the violent efforts of the Camp Ashraf residents for preventing the establishment of a Police station near the Camp by Iraqi police.

According to the court rulings, a number of Camp Ashraf residents have been arrested for investigation and the court ordered their expulsion from Iraq. But, the intervention of internal and external parties and the humanitarian dimensions of the issue have led to them being free and returned to the Camp, provided that they will appear at the Court whenever they were summoned. The representatives of the ICRC, UNAMI and the representative of the Iraqi Human Rights Ministry signed the commitment.

In 2011, after some internal pressures against the Iraqi government for the expulsion of these people as a result of the illegal acts of Ashraf residents, Iraqi Government made its final decision on their full expulsion. The expulsion process is also in progress under the supervision of the UN, UNAMI and UNHCR.



● Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights Website, "Response to the US State Department on relocation of MKO from Ashraf to Liberty," June 20, 2012; available at <http://www.humanrights.gov.iq/PageViewer.aspx?id=131>



## MKO Members are Under Pressure not to Return to Iran



During a meeting with Antonio Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Iraqi Minister of Human Rights Muhammad Al-Sudani stated that his country hoped for international community and UN's support for the efforts of the country and take measures for accepting the asylum seekers of the MKO.

He added that it is necessary that these countries care about the asylum of these people as much as they care about the Camp Ashraf.

Muhammad Al-Sudani said the Ministry of Human Rights has credible information that a great number of residents of Camp Ashraf are willing to return to Iran, but they are put under pressure not to do so.

The Commissioner is opposed to offering them a group asylum, because asylum is granted to individuals provided that the individual does not have a criminal record and renounces violence.

Members of the Organization have been relocated from Camp Ashraf under the human rights standards, despite their provocative measures against the Iraqi forces.

● Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights Website, February 29, 2012;  
available at <http://www.humanrights.gov.iq/ArticleShow.aspx?ID=1394>



